



**PHD**

**Questioning the revival : white ethnicities in the racial pentagon**

Ubeysekara, Ruwan

*Award date:*  
2008

*Awarding institution:*  
University of Bath

[Link to publication](#)

### **Alternative formats**

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:  
[openaccess@bath.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@bath.ac.uk)

Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Access is subject to the above licence, if given. If no licence is specified above, original content in this thesis is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Any third-party copyright material present remains the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed under its existing terms.

#### **Take down policy**

If you consider content within Bath's Research Portal to be in breach of UK law, please contact: [openaccess@bath.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@bath.ac.uk) with the details. Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

# **Questioning the Revival: White Ethnicities in the Racial Pentagon**

Ruwan Nisantha Ubeysekara

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of European Studies and Modern Languages

July 2008

## **COPYRIGHT**

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior consent of the author.

This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation.

[ ]

## Abstract

This thesis embodies a comprehensive analysis of the assimilation of Southern and Eastern European immigrant groups in the United States. Despite being considered racially distinct upon arrival en masse in the period 1880-1920, assimilation theorists posited that these white ethnic groups would be quickly absorbed into the prevailing white population. With the aid of Americanization campaigns targeting immigrants and their offspring, it appeared as though ethnic attachments had progressively declined with each successive generation. However, an explosion of white ethnic sentiment and activity in the 1960s and 1970s suggested otherwise, and led many to believe that white ethnic identities had not been entirely forsaken and were in fact being revived by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the immigrants.

This view is fundamentally questioned within this thesis which argues that, due to a multitude of forces and factors, white ethnicities could not have been revived in any meaningful sense. Significant attention is drawn to America's racialised history and race-based social framework within which white ethnics categorically benefited from being classified as 'white'. Also examined are factors such as generational distance from the point of immigration, language loss, upward mobility, and intermarriage, which together facilitated the comprehensive assimilation of white ethnic groups into the majority white population in the decades leading up to the alleged "ethnic revival." The upsurge in white ethnic sentiment in the 1960s and 1970s is therefore argued to have transpired due to the chance convergence of a number of different factors, and given the continued classification of Americans as belonging to one of five racial groups, this thesis concludes that white ethnicities stand little chance of surviving in the long-run within a society in which race continues to hold significant sway.

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
-------------------------	----------

<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and Hypothesis	1
1.2 Ethnicity Theory	3
1.3 Thesis Structure	9

---

### *PART I – Setting the Stage*

---

<b>Chapter 2– A Brief History of Race Relations in Pre-Civil Rights America</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Native Americans	16
2.2 African Americans	17
2.3 Mexicans, Asians, and Asian Indians	19
2.4 Race, Science, and Religion	23
2.5 The Elasticity of Whiteness	25
2.6 The Emergence of Ethnicity	28

<b>Chapter 3 – Approaches to White Ethnic Assimilation</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 Anglo-conformity and Americanization	33
3.2 The Melting Pot	41
3.3 Cultural Pluralism	47
3.3.1 Trans-nationality	52
3.4 The Expansion of Whiteness	55

---

### *PART II – The Revolution*

---

<b>Chapter 4 – The Revolution: Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural</b>	<b>60</b>
4.1 Civil Rights and Black Power	60
4.2 Red Power	67
4.3 Brown Power	68

4.4 Yellow Power	71
4.5 White (Ethnic) Power	74
4.5.1 White Ethnic Disassociation	78
4.5.2 Resentment and Racism	81
4.5.3 Widespread Disenchantment	90
4.5.4 Other Movements	94
4.5.5 State Sponsorship of Ethnicity	97
4.5.6 International Context	101
4.5.7 Ramifications of the White Ethnic Movement	104

---

*PART III –White Ethnicities: Before and After*

---

<b>Chapter 5 – The Whitening of White Ethnics</b>	<b>107</b>
5.1 Generational Distance	107
5.1.1 Hansen’s Law	115
5.2 Language Loss	117
5.3 Upward Mobility	125
5.3.1 Suburbanization	128
5.4 Intermarriage	134
 <b>Chapter 6 – White Ethnicities in Post-Civil Rights America</b>	 <b>145</b>
6.1 The ‘New’ Ethnicity	145
6.2 Symbolic Ethnicity	149
6.3 Optional Ethnicity	158
6.4 Symbolic and Optional Ethnicity in Context	168
6.5 White Ethnicities vis-à-vis Race	175
6.6 Ethnic or Racial Identity?	182

---

<b>Chapter 7 – Conclusion</b>	<b>192</b>
-------------------------------	------------

---

<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>209</b>
---------------------	------------

## Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Mark Gilbert (now Professor I believe) for having seen something within me that I did not know I had. Without his keen eye for intellectual potential I would never have pursued any form of postgraduate study. His confidence in my ability is what set me off on this somewhat epic journey and for that I will forever be grateful.

I am also greatly indebted to Mr Brian Neve who took over the reigns following Mark Gilbert's departure to newer and greener (and Italian) pastures. Mr. Neve is one of those people that somehow never fail to allay your fears. Whatever my concern, I would always feel more confident when walking out of his office than when I had walked in. I thank Mr. Neve for his patience and can only hope that he found at least parts of my work mildly stimulating. I would also like to thank Vanessa Callard for rescuing me on numerous occasions when I had gotten myself into difficulty with departmental processes.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank my parents, Thusitha and Ari, without whose support my postgraduate years would have undoubtedly been a far greater struggle. Their support not only enabled me to remain a child for far longer than is, in all probability, both normal and natural, but also bought me the time necessary to concoct my elaborate plan aimed at world domination. I thank my parents for enabling me to take up this opportunity and to fulfil the potential that Mark Gilbert saw in me, and I am fully aware that it is not an opportunity open to all.

I would also like to thank my sister, Himalee, and brother-in-law, Shanil, whose unremitting hospitality provided me a convenient base in London from which I could often vanish to random far-flung destinations when in need of a break from my work. Without this window to the world I would have most definitely lost even more of my sanity.

Despite my reluctance, I have little choice but to thank my two best mates, Angshu and Kim. Not only do I thank them for over a decade of friendship of the highest order, but also for often wittingly, yet sometimes unwittingly, subsidising our many engagements and activities over the years due to my impoverished student status. Needless to say, I have no intention of ever repaying them and remind them that a donation is not a debt.

This thesis is dedicated to my late maternal grandfather, P. Ruben Peiris, one of Sri Lanka's most prolific academic writers who travelled to England to witness my birth but passed away long before we could become acquainted. I can only hope to have in some way honoured his lifelong commitment to learning.

R.N.U.

*For my late grandfather,  
P. Ruben Peiris  
whose literary legacy I hope to have honoured*



## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Hypothesis

Browse through any textbook on the subject of twentieth-century American history and it will invariably attend to the Civil Rights and ‘Black Power’ movements of the 1960s and 1970s. A few may broaden their scope to include the ‘Red Power’, ‘Brown Power’, and ‘Yellow Power’ movements, as well as the those pertaining to Women’s Rights, Gay Rights, and even Animal Rights which are now specialist subjects in their own right. But fewer still will feature references to a ‘White Ethnic’ movement. Indeed, awareness that an upsurge in white ethnic activity ever occurred amid the social upheavals of the Civil Rights era continues to elude many Americans, particularly those born in the mid-1970s onward.

On the surface at least, much evidence and countless testimonials suggest that an “ethnic revival” did in fact take place among a sizeable segment of Americans of southern and eastern European descent whose forebears had entered the United States during the period of high immigration, 1880-1920. Many later-generation white ethnics seemingly rediscovered their roots in the 1960s and 1970s and asserted newfound ethnic identities with immense pride, expressing them by way of ethnic merchandise and an interest in genealogy, via ethnic themes in literature and the culture industries, an enthusiasm for Old World history and affairs, and by rushing to join ethnic organisations and, even, to establish new ones. To some, these developments provided ample evidence of a bona fide revival of white ethnicities and identities.

In any case, the escalation of white ethnic interests and assertiveness was directly at odds with the dominant sociological theory of the time with regard to immigrant ethnic groups—the straight-line model of assimilation. Originally conceived based on ideas formulated in 1945 by the sociologists W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, straight-line theory posits that each successive generation from the point of immigration becomes more assimilated and, consequently, upwardly mobile (Alba and Nee, 1997). As a result, ethnic groups and, therefore, ethnic identities are progressively eroded with each

successive generation resident in the United States and typically weakened beyond repair by the third generation. Moreover, the secular liberal expectation had been that group-based loyalties could not survive for very long within a modern individualist social system such as the United States. The events of the 1960s and 1970s thus posed a colossal challenge to assimilation theorists not only because such minority groups as blacks, Chicanos, and Asians in many respects explicitly rejected assimilation and demanded varying degrees of pluralism, but also because white ethnics, who were presumed to have been successfully assimilated, similarly rejected mainstream incorporation and rediscovered national origin identities.

If straight-line assimilation theory was one confined to academic circles, the events of the period also prompted the collapse of a popular symbol of American unity—the melting pot. Indeed, those that regarded the United States as a veritable melting pot within which national groups, at least European ones, intermingled and intermarried to produce a people wholly distinct from its constituent elements now faced the prospect that the American melting pot had failed to melt even the whitest of the more recent immigrant ethnic groups. The writings of Glazer and Moynihan (1963) were among the first to argue that, in New York City at least, the melting pot had not happened and that the city, and others like it, remained structured and divided along ethnic lines. Similarly, Michael Novak (1996 [1972]) was among the first to declare that Americans of southern and eastern European descent such as himself were “unmeltable ethnics.” The result was the collapse of the melting pot ideal and the discrediting of straight-line assimilation theory. In fact, the term ‘assimilation’ itself came to be regarded, in many quarters, as something of a faux pas.

This thesis essentially questions the position that, with regard to Americans of southern and eastern European descent, both the melting pot and straight-line theory were invalidated as a result of the upsurge in white ethnic identification and concerns in the 1960s and 1970s. The fundamental hypothesis embodied within this thesis is one which considers the possibility that straight-line theory may in fact hold for later-generation white ethnics and that the melting pot, i.e. the vision that European immigrant ethnic

groups would intermarry and lose their ethnic distinctiveness, remains a continuing reality despite its relative decline in popularity following the pluralist assertions that characterised the cultural revolution. Moreover, given the race-based transgressions that litter American history and the prevailing racialised social structure that continues to influence much of American life, this thesis examines whether white ethnic identities have any hope of surviving in the mid- to long-run in a society which, according to Hollinger (2000), continues to be characterised by an “ethno-racial pentagon” which essentially divides Americans into five demographic units corresponding to the colours black, white, brown, yellow, and red.

### 1.2 Ethnicity Theory

Any thesis that examines a question on the subject of ethnicity must inexorably attend to definitions of, and approaches to, the concept itself, the task of which has more often than not represented something of a minefield to the daring scholar. Although the term ‘ethnicity’ itself is of recent vintage, the first dictionary definition of which is to be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1972, the term ‘ethnic’ has a relatively extensive history, having derived from the Greek *ethnos* meaning ‘nation’ or ‘people’. Herodotus of Halicarnassus, considered to be the ‘father of history’, defined Greek ethnicity—or Hellenicity—in his ‘Histories’ (440 B.C.) as “*consisting in the same blood and same language, the common shrines of gods and cult and the same way of life*” (cited in Hinge, 2004: 2, original italics). Its adjectival form, *ethnikos*, later entered Latin in the form of *ethnicus* in reference to heathens, pagans, and others that did not share the dominant faith (Cornell and Harmann, 1998). The adjective ‘ethnic’, as pertaining to a heathen, pagan, or barbarian, came to be used in the English language from around the mid-fourteenth century onward (Eriksen, 1993).

As a sociological and anthropological concept, ethnicity can only really be said to have achieved a degree of permanency in the 1960s after having been popularised by the sociological studies conducted by W. Lloyd Warner and his associates in the 1940s. Since then, a number of theories, methodological considerations, definitions, and

redefinitions have progressively emerged that have stymied the prospect of achieving a universally accepted definition of the term. As a result, the study of ethnicity continues to be a complex, dynamic and ever-changing social science that is subject to ongoing development. In order to consolidate the framework of this thesis, however, the key approaches to ethnicity warrant consideration.

An apt starting point is to consider the ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ aspects of ethnicity. According to objective considerations of ethnicity, which represent the structural methodology, ethnic groups are understood to exist as real phenomena that:

...include the presence of at least some community institutions and organisations, the fact of having descendants and ancestors, as focus of cultural transmission and identity formation and the fact that there is a “script” for cultural behaviour, in the form of customs, rituals and preconceptions which provides the content to culture and its transmission and is manifested in overt behaviour patterns.

(Isajiw, 1992: 6)

From this perspective, then, ethnicity is considered to be a fact that is embodied by ethnic groups and which is evident in the form of concrete and observable structural factors such as heredity, institutions and behaviour patterns that exemplify a series of givens which are, as it were, ‘out there’. Ethnicity is thus an undeniable reality which has been handed down from generation to generation since time immemorial.

In contrast to the objective aspects of ethnicity, the subjective aspect, which incorporates the phenomenological methodology, is understood to be determined by socio-psychological factors and rather than presuming ethnicity as given stresses the centrality of numerous variables within the process of ethnic definition and self-definition. The classical theorist Max Weber, one of the founding fathers of the subjective approach, underlines this as he states that:

We shall call “ethnic groups” those human groups that entertain a subjective belief

in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the latter. In our sense, ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organised, that inspires belief in common ethnicity.

(1978, Vol. 1: 389: original italics)

Shared ethnicity as pertaining to specific ethnic groups is not an objective reality but is, rather, grounded in subjective belief. Moreover, as maintained by Weber, ethnicity is not simply an extension of kinship since the subjective aspect of ethnicity is not necessarily determined by actual relatedness itself, and therefore ethnic sentiments that lead to group formation can arise for any number of reasons. From this perspective, ethnicity is not a concrete and historic shared characteristic but, rather, grounded in a subjective belief which itself arises within particular contexts.

Consideration of both the objective and subjective perspectives provides the foundation from which to attend to the three dominant theories of ethnicity. The first is that of ‘primordialism’, which is the earliest approach to ethnicity to be found in sociological and anthropological literature. The primordialist approach can be traced back to the German Romanticism movement of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, particularly to the works of Herder and Fichte who posited that ethnicity was natural and immutable. Although this initial form of ethnicity theory came to be discredited due to its highly deterministic and chauvinistic underpinnings, the very idea of primordial ‘givens’ that are fixed at birth—such as blood ties, territorial attachment, race, religion, and language—was not entirely discarded and instead was adapted in the post-war period. One of the most elaborate expositions of primordialism can be found in Harold Isaacs’ *Idols of the Tribe* (1975) in which he refers to ethnicity as “the ready-made set of

endowments and identifications that every individual shares with others from the moment of their birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time and given place” (1975: 38). Isaacs’ stance on ethnicity can be said to be something of a continuation of the works of Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz in the 1950s and 1960s respectively, and taken together are often regarded as the foundations of the primordialist school of thought which regards ethnicity to be natural, fundamental, and fixed at birth, as Isaacs underlines:

As an extension of its own physical characteristics, the baby is born in a place, his *birthplace*, and the kind of place it is has already had and—in most cases—will have much to do with shaping the outlook and way of life that this new baby begins to share from his first day. The baby acquires a *name*, an individual name, a family name, a group name, a first symbol for the new child in the language through which he will discover the world. He is already a product of the *history and origins*, of which, by being born to this family in this place at this time, he becomes heir. He automatically acquires the *religion* of his family and his group and he becomes at once an acknowledged holder of the *nationality* or other condition of national, regional, or tribal affiliation his people hold.

(1975: 29, original italics)

According to primordialists, then, ethnicity is an ascribed trait which is fixed at birth and is, for the most part, permanent and unchangeable. However, although primordialism frequently incorporates geographical and cultural factors such as birthplace and religion, one particular branch of primordialism—sociobiology—argues that ethnicity is encoded within one’s genes. According to this perspective, as espoused by Pierre van den Berghe (1978), common descent and shared blood ties are the central features of ethnicity and, therefore, an ‘ethnic group’ is simply another term for a kin-group or a specific gene pool. Ethnicity, according to this approach, is argued to be an evolutionary product of the loyalty, altruism, and nepotism that is said to have been characteristic of groups of closely related kin and which enhanced their survival prospects vis-à-vis those lacking strength in numbers. Needless to say, this biologically-deterministic view of ethnicity can be said to lie at one extreme within the primordialist school of thought, yet its emphasis

on blood ties does correspond to popular understandings of ethnicity.

Another school of thought is that of 'instrumentalism', which gathered momentum in the 1970s in direct opposition to primordialist theories of ethnicity. Indeed, in stark contrast to primordialist assertions that ethnicity is fixed, unchangeable, and originating in some ancient epoch, instrumentalists argue that ethnicity is merely a means by which to secure economic and other material benefits. Hence, according to instrumentalism, the actual origins of an ethnic group are irrelevant and what matters most are its aims and objectives. The foundations of this school of thought are found in Fredrik Barth's seminal paper 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries' (1969) in which he jettisons culture altogether from the concept of ethnicity and argues that an ethnic group is simply an "organisational vessel" and that the social boundaries separating one group from another are of far greater significance than the actual cultures within them. Indeed, to Barth, cultural content is so variable and open to influence as to make it by and large irrelevant:

...most of the cultural matter that at any time is associated with a human population is *not* constrained by this boundary; it can vary, be learnt, and change without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance of the ethnic group. So when one traces the history of an ethnic group through time, one is *not* simultaneously, in the same sense, tracing the history of 'a culture': the elements of the present culture of that ethnic group have not sprung from the particular set that constituted the group's culture at a previous time, whereas the group has a continual organisational existence with boundaries (criteria of membership) that despite modifications have marked off a continuing unit.

(1969: 323, original italics)

Barth's exclusion of ethnic cultures from the concept of ethnicity inexorably led to the emergence of the view that ethnic groups are simply interest groups whose members declare affiliation, i.e. an ethnic identity, only upon perceiving there to be a strategic utility attached to doing so. Thus, as Barth contends, ethnic groups as organisational vessels "may be of great relevance to behaviour, but they need not be; they may pervade

all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity” (1969: 299). For this reason, instrumentalists argue that ethnicity is situational and relevant only within certain contexts. Because it posits that ethnicity is situational and underpinned by a utilitarian logic, the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity was particularly embraced by Marxists who argue that ethnicity is simply a form of “false consciousness” that provisionally disguises the centrality of class struggle. Similarly, rational choice theorists find instrumentalism the more accurate approach to ethnicity since it implies that individuals identify with, and act together as, an ethnic group only when it is in their individual self-interest to do so. As a result, much of the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity is concerned with the manipulation of ethnicity by elites in pursuit of their own interests.

Needless to say, both primordialism and instrumentalism attract extensive criticism. By claiming that ethnicity is fixed and fundamental, primordialists are often accused of perceiving ethnic groups as static entities, or museum pieces, and of dismissing the social forces that impact upon group boundaries and identities that render them far more malleable than primordialists presume. Similarly, instrumentalists are customarily condemned for their unreserved emphasis upon material gain which fails to explain why some ethnic groups and identities have remained stable over significant periods of time regardless of the social costs and/or benefits attached to them. With this in mind, if ethnicity is in fact a “false consciousness” it is certainly a potent one.

Perhaps influenced by this conflicting relationship between primordialism and instrumentalism, an alternative theory of ethnicity emerged in the 1980s, albeit as an outgrowth of the latter. This third school of thought—‘constructivism’—posits that ethnicity is neither fixed and fundamental nor individually chosen for material gain. Somewhat compromisingly, constructivists contend that ethnicity is socially constructed but within specific social and political contexts. As a result, ethnic group boundaries and identities are somewhat situational and can change, but this does not occur promptly in response to perceived net gain but, rather, gradually over time, thus accounting for how new ethnic groups come into existence and why others are no more. Ethnic groups can



thus be constructed but, equally, can also fragment and fade into oblivion over time. Moreover, constructivism focuses on the fluid nature of ethnic identities and views them as based on a belief in primordial characteristics but only within specific social conditions which are subject to change in the long-run. Constructivism thus signifies something of a middle path between the primordialist extreme which asserts that ethnicity is a natural state of being based on blood ties that date from prehistoric times, and the instrumentalist claim that ethnic groups are merely fragile social constructs founded upon individual opportunism. Perhaps for this reason, constructivism has emerged as the dominant approach to ethnicity in the early years of the twenty-first century (Joireman, 2003).

These theories of ethnicity may, on the face of it, seem far-removed from the turmoil that typified 1960s and 1970s America. However, upon viewing the events of the period through the lens of ethnicity theory, the above theories undoubtedly provide the crucial framework by which to consider the bona fide causes and effects of the white ethnic upsurge.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into three parts. Part I consists of two chapters and is primarily concerned with providing the historical and theoretical backdrop within which the Civil Rights and other movements emerged. Despite the fact that the study embodied within this thesis is one that relates, above all, to questions pertaining to white ethnics—those of southern and eastern European descent—broader issues of race and ethnicity make it wholly inadequate to consider such questions within a vacuum. Hence, Chapter 2 provides a brief history of racial interaction prior to the Civil Rights era, paying particularly attention to the state-sanctioned treatment of racial minority groups in American history. One could query how the decimation of Native American peoples, the brutal enslavement of blacks, and the legally-sanctioned discriminatory treatment of other racial groups, much of which occurred well before the arrival of southern and eastern European immigrants in the period 1880-1920, could have any bearing whatsoever upon

the activities of white ethnic groups in the 1960s and 1970s. After all, the United States in the 1960s and 1970s arguably could not be more different to that of the colonial era as well as to that of the nation's first century of independent existence. But the fact remains that the southern and eastern European immigrants that made the voyage to the United States during the period of high immigration entered a highly racialised and segregated society in which the historic treatment and experiences of racial minority groups played a decisive role in determining their own social status, prospects, and future participation in American society. Therefore, Chapter 2 focuses concisely upon the key incidents, events, and legislative actions that characterised race relations in pre-Civil Rights America, dating back to when the first group of colonists set foot on American soil so as to, as it were, present the overall picture of America's racialised history. This chapter also draws attention to the key philosophic debates and scientific developments that influenced approaches to race in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, particularly regarding the justification of slavery, Darwinism, and 'scientific racism'. It also outlines the post-war offensive against racial theory and the emergence of ethnicity as a bona fide concept shortly prior to the onset of what is now regarded as the Civil Rights era.

The second chapter that lies within Part I examines key approaches to assimilation in pre-Civil Rights American history. Indeed, the very term assimilation is often presumed to be synonymous with conformity to the historic values and ideals of the Anglo-American-dominated establishment. However, Chapter 3 will reveal that notions of Anglo-conformity only emerged in the nineteenth century, and only in full force following the victory of the North in the American Civil War. As is argued in this chapter, the English language proved to be a decisive weapon in efforts to bring the various non-English speaking European national groups in line with the Anglo majority. However, it was only when southern and eastern Europeans began arriving in vast numbers from 1880 onward that assimilation became a grave concern, and Americanization campaigns were instituted in order to effectively enforce American values and ideals upon the new immigrants. These new white ethnic groups were permitted to enter the United States as 'free whites' but were undoubtedly considered inferior to the northwestern European white population and were thus targeted with policies and practices aimed at facilitating

their assimilation. Needless to say, these efforts were not extended to non-whites who were entirely excluded from notions of the American nationality.

In addition to Anglo-conformity, Chapter 3 also examines the well-known ‘Melting Pot’ symbol that emerged in the early twentieth-century following Israel Zangwill’s play of the same name. Although more a vision than a theory of assimilation, the image of American society as a melting pot of nationalities captured the popular imagination, particularly at a time when the assimilation of the new white ethnic immigrants was a growing concern. The significance of the melting pot metaphor to this thesis lies in the fact that it came to be explicitly rejected by many groups, including white ethnic groups, in the 1960s and 1970s. This chapter also examines Horace Kallen’s brand of ‘cultural pluralism’ and Randolph Bourne’s concept of ‘trans-nationality’. These approaches to the assimilation of immigrants were, for the most part, ignored as being antithetical to prevailing notions of Americanism but were to become more respectable and acceptable both during and after the Civil Rights movement began to gather momentum.

Having set the stage, Part II comprises a single chapter that examines the racial and ethnic upheavals that characterised the 1960s and 1970s. The first to be addressed are the Civil Rights and ‘Black Power’ movements which, although monumental in their own right, also provided a template for other non-white minorities to unite and surface in a similar colour-coded fashion and campaign for redress for past and present injustices. Given the historic treatment of non-white minorities, the emergence of ‘Red Power’, ‘Brown Power’, and ‘Yellow Power’ can be understood, retrospectively, as having been a natural outcome of the precedent set by the black-led Civil Rights movement. Amidst the turmoil, however, those of southern and eastern European descent also coalesced upon the premise that they too had experienced significant prejudice and discrimination and were thus similarly entitled to redress. Unlike the racial minority movements, this surge in white ethnic identities and activities could not possibly have been foreseen since Americans of southern and eastern European descent were classified as ‘white’ and were generally perceived to have enjoyed all privileges associated with that racial status. However, although the Civil Rights movement played a significant role in triggering this

white ethnic upsurge, particularly following legislative changes that produced such policies as affirmative action, this chapter will consider other causes. This period, when taken as a whole, was characterised by widespread disenchantment stemming from a number of different spheres which may all have contributed, in varying degrees, to the sudden emergence of white ethnic interests. Accordingly, Chapter 4 examines the myriad causes of this “ethnic revival,” from the racial minority movements to the role of the state, the media and culture industries, as well as the international context within which ethnicity, in general, was achieving greater prominence.

The third and final part of this thesis consists of two chapters, the first of which effectively takes a chronological backward step and, to all intents and purposes, can be regarded as the prequel to the chapter preceding it. Unlike Chapter 4 which examines the ethnic upsurge within the political climate of its time, Chapter 5 takes a step back in order to locate the white ethnic upsurge in relation to the prominence given to white ethnic identities at the time. In order to do this, Chapter 5 examines four key factors—generational distance, language, upward mobility and suburbanization, and intermarriage—and considers the role that each had played in relation to white ethnic identities and white ethnic boundaries, particularly in the post-war period leading up to the cultural revolution. The significance of the first of these four factors, generational replacement, lies in the fact that it was predominantly later-generation white ethnics, and not the immigrant generation, that were seemingly rediscovering their roots. This point is crucial since the theory of straight-line assimilation posits that ethnicity will diminish in felt importance with each successive generation from the point of immigration.

Language, as Barth has argued, may not be imperative to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, but language loss certainly can play a part in facilitating assimilation and diminishing ethnic differences. Ancestral languages had been progressively abandoned in the decades leading up to the upsurge, and hence the later-generation white ethnics that led the ethnic upsurge were effectively returning to their roots through an English-language medium. Since language plays a decisive role in the shaping of cultural perceptions and attitudes, this chapter considers the role that language loss had on

attempts to revive ethnic identities. By the same token, white ethnics had experienced significant upward mobility in the post-war period and, for the most part, had achieved socio-economic parity with older-stock whites. Thus, unlike the immigrant generation, later-generation white ethnics in the 1960s and 1970s no longer needed ethnicity as a buffer against nativist hostility. Suburbanization in the post-war period also meant that those that could relocate to the suburbs certainly did, particularly in light of the migration of southern blacks to the North following the war. This, in addition to the influx of immigrants from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean following the relaxation of immigration quotas, meant that the ethnic differences between white ethnics and older stock whites were likely to have been of minimal importance by the time of the upsurge in white ethnic activity.

However, significant levels of intermarriage had taken place from the second generation onward which inexorably meant that many, if not a majority, of those rushing to rediscover their roots in the 1960s and 1970 already had more than one ethnic background to delve into. In light of this, the impact of intermarriage is considered in this chapter in relation to the ethnic identities that arose during this period.

Having considered the status of white ethnic identities and boundaries by the 1960s and 1970s in Chapter 5, the question arises as to what emerged as a result of the fervent ethnic activity of the period. Chapter 6 examines what Michael Novak claims was a “new ethnicity” involving a form of ethnic identification that did not straightforwardly unearth the ethnic group structures of generations past. In Novak’s view, the white ethnic movement was a positive development which enabled white ethnics to be proud of their origins and which liberated them from assimilatory pressures to conform to mainstream values and ideals. This chapter also attends to the seminal paper by Herbert Gans, who was arguably more attuned to the events of the time and inferred that the surge in white ethnic identification during this period was merely symbolic and hence embodied more style than substance. This hypothesis was duly taken up by Mary C. Waters who correspondingly found that the white ethnic identities that emerged as a result of the cultural revolution were ‘optional’ and ‘cost-free’ and were for the most part superficial

but also, somewhat paradoxically, carried significant import. Both Gans' and Waters' observations and studies need to be situated within the context of the time, and hence the neo-conservatism of the Reagan administrations, and its effects upon the post-civil rights ethno-racial climate, is accordingly examined in relation to legislative changes enacted in the years between Gans' and Waters' publications.

In order to project the future of white ethnicities in the twenty-first century and beyond, Chapter 6 also analyses the relationship between publicly-held notions of race and ethnicity in the United States, and utilises the studies of Richard D. Alba and Charles A. Gallagher, as well as the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau findings, in order to reach a conclusion regarding the survival prospects of white ethnicities within the racial pentagon of American society.

In the 1940s, the straight-line theorist W. Lloyd Warner observed that "The future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited; it is likely that they will quickly be absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of American history will end, and another, that of race, will begin" (cited in Gallagher, 1997: 7). The primary purpose of this thesis is to ascertain whether or not he was right.

## Part I – Setting the Stage

## Chapter 2 - A Brief History of Race Relations in Pre-Civil Rights America

### 2.1 Native Americans

America's history of racial conflict stems from the very first permanent English colony established in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Having heard tales of brutality toward Native Indians at the hands of the Spanish Conquistadores, the colonists had initially hoped to establish peace with the natives and convert them to Christianity, but native resistance to colonial settlement and expansion inevitably resulted in conflict. The Indian massacre of settlers in Virginia in 1622 marked the beginning of almost three centuries of violent encounters and following King Philip's War (1675-76) in New England there was much scepticism regarding whether peace with America's native population could ever be achieved (Gosset, 1997).

By the time of the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), Native Americans had come to embody the indigenous middleman. Benjamin Franklin was among those sent as emissaries to sign treaties with Indian tribes guaranteeing their neutrality. With the ratification of independence via the Treaty of Paris in 1783, Great Britain ceded substantial Indian territories to the newly-formed United States and in 1830 the passing of the Indian Removal Act gave President Jackson both the authority and the funding to pursue treaties with Indian tribes which entailed their relocation to land west of the Mississippi. Indian protest to the Act came in the form of the Black Hawk War (1832), Second Creek War (1836), and the Second Seminole War (1835-42). The Indian Appropriations Act, passed by Congress in 1851, approved the establishment of reservations upon which Indians were to reside. Sporadic violence between Indians and settlers would nevertheless continue until 1890, when the Dakota Sioux were massacred by United States forces in what would mark the end of Native American resistance to territorial usurpation.

Significant levels of intermarriage had taken place between Indians and whites and by the 1900 U.S. Census Native Indians were categorised according to their degree of white ancestry. Intermarriage had enabled many to become citizens, but the granting of full



U.S. citizenship to all of the United States' indigenous population came via the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In 1934, the Indian Reorganisation Act allowed for a limited form of sovereignty upon reservations and enabled tribal councils to practise limited self-government. Despite being subjected to territorial usurpation, exploitation, massacre, displacement, and relocation, what came closest to annihilating America's indigenous population was biological in origin. Diseases transported across the Atlantic spawned epidemics such as smallpox and influenza against which native tribes had little natural immunity. Estimates regarding the number of Native Americans that succumbed to foreign-borne disease are commonly held to run into the millions.

## 2.2 African Americans

In 1619, the first twenty Africans were sold to British colonists in Jamestown, Virginia, and were initially treated little differently to British and Irish fixed-term indentured servants (Conway, 1968; Roberts, 1994). Marriages between African bondsmen and British and Irish bondswomen was not uncommon as choice of marriage partner was typically determined by social class and status (Lincoln, 1967). However, circumstances would change dramatically over the four ensuing decades with the introduction of the lifelong chattel enslavement of Africans. Race was to become synonymous with class.

The key to maintaining the institution of slavery was segregation. This division between free whites and enslaved blacks was established and perpetuated by a comprehensive and systematic social structure designed to preserve each group's social status. One of the crucial aspects of this structure was the prevention of racial amalgamation, and this was achieved via the imposition of stiff penalties with respect to interracial marriage. In 1661, Maryland became the first colony to legislate against interracial marriage and decreed that any free white woman that married a Negro slave would be legally bound to serve her husband's master for the duration of her husband's life, and that any children borne of such marriages would also be slaves (Barron, 1972). Two decades later, the state passed a new law stating that a free white woman could marry a Negro slave with the permission of the slave's master or mistress and retain her freedom and that of any children borne of

the marriage upon payment of a fine by the respective master or mistress as well as by the clergyman that was to conduct the ceremony. Massachusetts (1705), North Carolina (1715) and Pennsylvania (1725) followed suit. This was a trend that would continue, and by the early-twentieth century thirty states had passed laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

The tenet of slavery itself became a focal point of the American Civil War (1861-65) following the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) that Congress could not override state laws governing slavery. Abraham Lincoln's 'Emancipation Proclamation' of 1863 was sanctioned following the victory of the North in the form of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865) abolishing slavery. This was followed by the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) granting citizenship and equal protection of the law to blacks, and the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) which conferred full voting rights.

Despite the abolition of slavery and the official granting of citizenship and equality to blacks, to the vast majority of whites integration was an unimaginable prospect. In 1892, Homer Plessy, who was one-eighth black, was arrested and jailed in Louisiana following his refusal to move from his seat in a 'whites only' train compartment to a seat in the 'coloureds' compartment. Plessy unsuccessfully challenged the State of Louisiana, arguing that his treatment violated his constitutional rights guaranteed by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. In 1896, Plessy took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court but was again unsuccessful. The ruling in the now infamous case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) rejected Plessy's arguments regarding the violation of his rights and upheld the doctrine of 'separate but equal' as being in complete accordance with the Constitution. The resulting public policies enforcing the segregation of blacks and whites in the Southern states came to be known as Jim Crow Laws.

The practical application of racial segregation, however, raised questions regarding definitions of 'black' and 'white'. The 1850 census had been the first to classify individuals as either 'white', 'black', or 'mulatto' and the 1890 census had extended this

further to include 'quadroon' and 'octoroon' (Hischman, Alba, and Farley, 2000). What emerged came to be known as the 'one drop rule', whereby an individual with even the slightest trace of black ancestry was classified as black. This state of affairs encouraged many fair-skinned individuals that would legally have been classified as black to 'pass' as whites and to blend into the majority white population. The prospect of 'passing' was so great a concern that in many American cities 'spotters' were employed to identify and prevent fair-skinned blacks from entering segregated white-only establishments (Lincoln, 1967). By the early twentieth-century, almost every state had passed legislation based on the 'one drop rule'.

Jim Crow Laws were eventually abolished in 1954, following the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the racial segregation of schools violated the equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment thereby overthrowing the Supreme Court ruling of 1896. In December of the following year, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to surrender her seat to a white person on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks' arrest is often cited as the starting point of the Civil Rights Movement.

### 2.3 Mexicans, Asians, and Asian Indians

Mexicans in the southwest effectively became Americans following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) signed by the Mexican and United States governments. Much of the southwest had theoretically belonged to Mexico following her independence from Spain in 1821. However, the entry of the 'Republic of Texas' into the Union in 1845 triggered the Mexican-American War (1846-48), and the United States' victory led to the signing of the Treaty in accordance with which Mexico ceded California, Nevada, Utah, and portions of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Wyoming. Some of the conditions of the Treaty included the classification of Mexicans as 'free white persons' and the protection of lands granted by either the Spanish or Mexican authorities. However, the reality was de facto segregation and the violation of a number of articles of the Treaty by the United States. Moreover, the Mexicans that remained within the ceded territories

effectively became a colonised people embodying the impoverished agricultural underclass. Mexicans became the workhorses of agribusiness and were habitually victimised by immigration policies (Omi and Winant, 1994).

Other groups also faced significant levels of prejudice and discrimination in pre-Civil Rights America. The Chinese were the first to arrive in large numbers following the discovery of gold in California in the mid-nineteenth century. The majority were young, single men providing contract labour for the mines, the railroad-building industry, farming and fisheries. Chinese immigrants found themselves in a highly racially dichotomised society within which they were something of a racial anomaly. They were neither white nor black, were considered non-assimilable, and were thus denied the right to naturalise as well as the rights and protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Much legislation specifically aimed at penalising Chinese immigrants was passed in California, and San Francisco in particular, where the majority had settled. Such legislation emerged in the form of a Foreign Miner's Tax (1850), the barring of Chinese immigrants from testifying against a white person in a court of law (1854), the removal of Chinese children from public schools in San Francisco (1859), a Chinese Fisherman's Tax (1860) and a Police Tax on every Chinese resident in California (1862). Furthermore, in 1854 the California Supreme Court ruled in the case of *People v. Hall* that the Chinese should be classified as "Indian" and thus denied the rights and protections accorded to whites (Omi and Winant, 1994).

In 1868, the Burlingame Treaty was ratified granting China 'Most Favoured Nation' status, permitting unlimited Chinese immigration and residency but falling short of allowing Chinese immigrants to naturalise. By then, however, virulent prejudice had led to the creation of Chinese enclaves, or Chinatowns, whose residents had limited contact with society at large. The state of California nevertheless found ways to penalise Chinatown residents by passing the Sidewalk Ordinance (1870) prohibiting the carriage of goods on poles on sidewalks, and the Laundry Ordinance (1873) aimed at Chinese-owned laundries that did not employ horse-drawn vehicles.

The onset of the 'Long Depression' in the 1870s intensified hostility toward Chinese immigrants, particularly at the hands of working class whites. The Transcontinental Railroad had been completed in 1869 leaving significant numbers of Chinese labourers out of work, and allegations emerged accusing the unemployed Chinese of depressing wages. Resentment led to campaigns of violence such as the 1871 massacre of the residents of Los Angeles' Chinatown and the 1877 anti-Chinese riots in Chico, California. The result was the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) suspending Chinese immigration for ten years. Violence against Chinese immigrants nevertheless continued, of which the Rock Springs Massacre of 1885 is most prolific. In 1898, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *The United States v. Wong Kim Ark* that American-born children of Chinese descent were eligible for naturalisation in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. Nonetheless, the 1882 Act prohibiting Chinese immigration was renewed twice before being made permanent 1904. The racial element to the termination of Chinese immigration in 1882 is highlighted by its legislation three months prior to the exclusion of "lunatics, idiots, convicts, and those likely to become a public charge" (Carlson, 1987: 55). The Act would only be repealed in 1943.

Following the curtailment of Chinese immigration, significant numbers of Japanese immigrants began arriving in the United States from the mid-1880s. Most arrived via the independent kingdom of Hawaii which had begun to import Japanese labour for its expanding sugar plantation industry. Hawaii would later be annexed by the United States in 1898 and become an official U.S. territory in 1900, thus enabling numerous Japanese immigrants to migrate from the archipelago to the mainland. The vast majority settled on the west coast, primarily California, where Chinese immigrants had settled before them. Public reaction to Japanese immigrants was akin to that faced by the Chinese and campaigns emerged calling for the 1882 Exclusion Act to be extended to include the Japanese. In 1906, the San Francisco School Board ordered the segregation of Japanese children from public schools, but the order was rescinded by President Roosevelt following strong protest from the Japanese government. The result was the 1908 "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the two nations, under the auspices of which Japanese immigration to the United States was drastically curtailed. The State of California would

later pass the Heney-Webb Alien Land Act in 1913 forbidding property ownership by aliens, such as the Japanese, that were ineligible for citizenship.

Laws barring Asian immigrants from naturalising were met with some opposition and in 1922 Takao Ozawa, a Japanese immigrant, filed for naturalisation. Ozawa's petition did not, however, challenge the prevailing race-based restrictions on naturalisation and instead argued that the Japanese should be classified as white. The Supreme Court ruled against Ozawa, stating that the category of white was reserved for Caucasians and that the Japanese did not belong to this group. The American-born children of Asian immigrants were entitled to U.S. citizenship under the 1898 Supreme Court ruling, but immigrants themselves were not permitted, on racial grounds, to naturalise. Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour in 1942, the Japanese community in the United States were subjected to virulent state-sanctioned retaliatory measures. Executive Order 9066 issued by President Roosevelt authorised the evacuation of over 100,000 individuals of Japanese descent, the majority of whom were second-generation American-born U.S. citizens, and their internment in special relocation camps. Some were detained for periods of up to four years.

The turn of the twentieth-century also witnessed the arrival of immigrants of Indian origin. Many entered the United States via Canada which at the time was a dominion of the British Empire. Congress would soon pass the Asiatic Barred Zone Act in 1917 preventing further immigration to the United States of those of Indian origin. In 1922, shortly after the Supreme Court had ruled that Takao Ozawa could not naturalise as a U.S. citizen because he was not Caucasian, an Indian immigrant by the name of Bhagat Singh Thind filed for naturalisation on the basis that he was Caucasian. The Supreme Court rejected his claim, declaring that the framers of the Constitution would not have allowed an individual of Thind's origin to naturalise despite Indians being anthropologically defined as Caucasian. According to the Court's ruling, Caucasian meant 'white' and immigrants of Indian origin were to be classified as Asians. As a result of this verdict, Indian immigrants became subject to numerous legal restrictions such as California's Alien Land Acts of 1913 and 1920.

#### 2.4 Race, Science and Religion

The treatment of non-whites, both socially and legislatively, was very much in accordance with prevailing philosophic and scientific arguments on the subject of race. European naturalists had begun to categorise races from the late-seventeenth century onward, of which the *Systema Naturae* of Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus became widely accepted. Published in 1735, Linnaeus identified four groups—*Asiaticus*, *Europaeus*, *Africanus*, and *Americanus*—which were widely accepted by the naturalists of his day and considered most in accordance with biblical authority (Barnicot, 1960). But it was the German physiologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach that established modern physical anthropology with his *De Generis Humani Variete Nativa* in 1775 in which he also put forward a four-fold classification before extending it to five in 1781—Caucasian, Ethiopian, American, Mongolian and Malay (McRae, 1960; Banton, 1967).

Interaction with, and the subsequent categorisation of, different groups sparked off debate between monogenists, who believed that all human races were descended from a single biblical couple, and polygenists who argued that such palpable differences in phenotype had to have been the result of separate and unrelated acts of creation (Banton, 1987). The central point of the debate was essentially whether all races belonged to the same species, as argued by monogenists, or whether each race signified a distinct species in itself. The term *mulatto*, which came to be employed to describe the offspring of one white parent and one black parent, was derived from the Spanish word *mula*, meaning 'mule', as the offspring of such unions were presumed to be barren.

Debate notwithstanding, the notion of clear-cut races had become established in popular thought and literature declaring alleged proof of Caucasian superiority burgeoned. In 1839, the Philadelphia physician and craniologist Samuel George Morton published his *Crania Americana* in which he detailed the alleged natural superiority of Europeans over Native Americans, Asians and Africans. The Scottish anatomist Robert Knox followed suit in 1850 with *The Races of Men* in which he too asserted the superiority of Anglo-Saxon and Nordic races. The French Aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau, considered to be the founder of modern racist ideology, published his *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*

(1853-55) in which he advanced the theory of a master Aryan race and attributed the fall of the Greek and Roman empires to the dilution of Aryan blood as a result of racial interbreeding. The American Egyptologist George Gliddon collaborated with the Alabama physician Josiah C. Nott in 1854 to publish *Types of Mankind* which popularised the polygenist argument regarding separate and distinct origins.

With the publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871, Charles Darwin essentially nullified the arguments of both monogenists and polygenists. Despite his claim that all races had a common origin, the antithesis to the polygenist argument, his inference that man had evolved from a lesser type affronted those that believed in the purposeful design of a divine creator. However, had all groups have evolved from a common lesser form then it seemed apparent to some that certain types had evolved to a greater degree than others. This concept was certainly clear to Francis Galton, a cousin of Darwin, who in 1883 coined the term 'Eugenics'—a movement toward selective breeding which proposed that those regarded as fit should be encouraged to mate with each other and those considered unfit discouraged from mating at all. It was Galton's conviction that man had both the means and the power with which to accelerate human evolution and that what nature performed "blindly, slowly, and ruthlessly" could be accomplished "providently, quickly, and kindly" (Galton, 1904: 83). Eugenics was embraced by the American lawyer Madison Grant who published his influential *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916. Grant was a formidable proponent of negative eugenics and urged the mandatory sterilisation of criminals, the diseased and the mentally unwell, as well as "worthless race types" (Niro, 2003). Lothrop Stoddard, the American political theorist, continued in a similar vein to that of his mentor Madison with his 1920 publication entitled *The Rising Tide of Colour against White-World Supremacy* in which he detailed white superiority and outlined the alleged threats faced by white supremacy from supposedly inferior coloured groups.

Justification for the enslavement of blacks in America did not, however, have to rely solely upon pseudo-science. Slavery was justified in Greco-Roman philosophy, underlined by Aristotle's contention that "Those who are so inferior to others as is the



body to the soul, and beasts to men, are by nature slaves and benefit, like all other inferiors, from living under the rule of a master" (cited in Banton, 1967: 13). Slavery was also justified on religious grounds, based upon claims that blacks were the descendants of Ham. As stated in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament, a curse was placed on Ham by his father Noah for having seen him naked. The 'Curse of Canaan' foretold that Ham's son would live in servitude to his brothers.

### 2.5 The Elasticity of Whiteness

The 'white' category was also, somewhat paradoxically, far from exact. This had not been the case from the outset since the vast majority of early settlers had immigrated primarily from north-western Europe. Such immigrants had been deemed racially compatible with the majority Anglo-Americans and merely in need of cultural assimilation which, more often than not, was achieved with ease. The Irish were the first voluntary immigrant group whose racial status was questioned and that faced extensive nativist hostility following their arrival in large numbers during the mid-nineteenth century as a result of the Irish potato famine. The historic and tumultuous relationship between Britain and Ireland undoubtedly fuelled notions that the physical characteristics of the Irish bordered on racial difference—it was not uncommon for the Irish to be referred to as 'white niggers' (Kivisto, 2002: 46). The Irish were also commonly cast as alcoholics with criminal tendencies, and their Catholic faith and alleged deference to priests and to the papacy were considered a threat to American democracy. The ambiguous racial status of Irish immigrants is underlined by Jacobson who states that:

...it is one of the compelling circumstances of American cultural history that an Irish immigrant in 1877 could be a despised Celt in Boston—a threat to the republic—and yet a solid member of The Order of Caucasians for the Extermination of the Chinaman in San Francisco, gallantly defending U.S. shores from an invasion of "Mongolians."

(1998: 5)

The Irish did, to all intents and purposes, eventually become accepted as unambiguously

white, yet this was not an effortless process. The questionable racial status of Irish immigrants could not continue indefinitely and, as a result, the Irish had faced something of a rational choice—to move up or to move down the racial hierarchy. As a result, according to Kivisto:

Not surprisingly, part of the strategy designed by the Irish to promote their inclusion and to combat prejudice directed against them was to become unambiguously white. In so doing, the Irish sought to distance themselves from outsider groups by embracing the white supremacist oppression and exclusion of American Indians and African Americans. They acquiesced to the claim that the dominant culture was to be construed in terms of a core that was white, Anglo-Saxon in origin, and Protestant in religion, or in other words WASP.

(2002: 46)

A further challenge was posed by the millions of immigrants, mostly of southern and eastern European origin, that entered the United States via Ellis Island during the period of high immigration, 1880-1920. Like the Irish before them, these immigrants were permitted to enter as free whites but were considered unquestionably inferior to the majority white group and their arrival en masse generated significant hostility on the part of native-born Americans and anxiety regarding the assimilability or, rather, non-assimilability of these new arrivals and their offspring into mainstream American society. The new immigrants were typically regarded as being accustomed to living under despotism and were thus deemed unfit for self-government. An educator by the name of Ellwood P. Cubberly wrote in 1909 of these new immigrants:

These southern and eastern Europeans are of a different type from the north Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock.

(cited in Gordon, 1964: 98)

Disparaging slurs rapidly emerged in reference to the new immigrants. The Italians were commonly dubbed 'wops', 'dagos', and 'guineas'—the latter having been derived from 'Guinea Negro', referring to the African coast from which slaves had been purchased and transported to America. Henry Cabot Lodge, a United States Senator, described Slovak immigrants in 1891 as "not a good acquisition for us to make, since they appear to have so many items in common with the Chinese" (cited in Jacobson, 1998: 42). Hence, to many, the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were at best culturally inferior and at worst of questionable racial stock. Such doubt regarding the whiteness of the new immigrants is perhaps best illustrated by the case of *Rollins v. Alabama* (1922) in which an Alabama appeals court overturned the conviction of Jim Rollins, an African American, for the crime of miscegenation on the basis that it could not be proven that the woman in question, a Sicilian immigrant, had no Negro blood whatsoever. According to Jacobson (1998), although the court did not rule out that Edith LaBue might be white the verdict suggests that her virtue did not merit the same level of 'protection' consigned by the state to white women. The appeals court held that the prosecution had not provided sufficient evidence that Labue was unquestionably white.

For immigrants such as the Irish and the southern and eastern Europeans, in order to be considered fully-fledged whites they not only had to look white but also act white. Although permitted to enter the United States as free whites their racial status could not be taken for granted. An individual could effectively 'lose' their white racial status simply by associating with non-whites—an event that occurred with respect to Italian immigrants in New Orleans (Jacobson, 1998). Similarly, the Alabama appeals court that overturned Jim Rollins' conviction in all probability deemed that the mere fact that Edith Labue had interacted with Rollins in such a manner as to bring forth his initial prosecution was sufficient to racially disqualify her from the laws designed to safeguard the virtue of white women.

The southern and eastern Europeans did, however, like the Irish that had arrived before them, become unequivocally white and were undoubtedly aided extensively by their greater physical contrast to non-whites. The post-Civil War era had witnessed the mass

migration of blacks from south to north, and the new immigrants that had arrived via Ellis Island were unmistakably more white than black. But to become members of the dominant racial group involved adopting the mores of that group and wielding the ascribed societal power that only members of that group were privy to. Hence, although by rational choice, by 'becoming white' the new immigrants effectively sanctioned the prevailing racial structure that typified American society.

## 2.6 The Emergence of Ethnicity

By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the significance of racial divisions had come to be questioned within a variety of scientific and social-scientific quarters. A key figure in this area was the German-born American anthropologist Franz Boas, commonly regarded as the father of American anthropology. During his tenure as Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University, Boas conducted a study under the auspices of the United States Immigration Commission of the physical characteristics of immigrants entering the United States via Ellis Island. By measuring the cephalic index, or skull shapes, of the immigrants and their children, Boas found that the American-born children of immigrants differed physiologically from their foreign-born parents and siblings. What this proved, to Boas, was that physical types, or races, were not fixed and fundamental but were conditional and affected by factors such as physical environment, nutrition, and culture. In Boas' own words:

It is most remarkable that the change in head-form of American-born individuals occurs almost immediately after the arrival of their parents in America. A comparison of individuals born in Europe with those born in America shows that the change of head-form is almost abrupt at the time of immigration. The child born abroad, even if it is less than one year old at the time of arrival, has the head-form of the European-born. The child born in America, even if born only a few months after the arrival of the parents, has the head-form of the American-born. The failure of American environment to influence the foreign-born might be expected, because the total change of the head-index from early youth to adult life is very small. On the other hand, those measurements of the body which continue

to change during the period of growth show a marked influence of American environment upon European-born individuals who arrive in America as young children.

(Boas, 1911: 87)

Boas also applied scientific research methods to combat popular notions of racial superiority. During the very same period that witnessed the emergence of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests and alleged proof of white racial and cultural superiority, Boas argued that “cultural environment is a most important factor in determining the results of the so-called intelligence tests” (1931: 12) and that:

I believe the present state of our knowledge justifies us in saying that, while individuals differ, biological differences between races are small. There is no reason to believe that one race is by nature so much more intelligent, endowed with great will power, or emotionally more stable than another, that the difference would materially influence its culture.

(Boas, 1931: 13-14)

As a result of his studies and findings, it is Gossett’s contention that Boas “did more to combat theories of racial superiority and inferiority than any other person in history” (1997: xiv).

The leading American sociologist Robert E. Park, one of the foremost students of immigrant assimilation and race relations in the United States, also argued, like Boas, that race did not pre-determine culture:

It is not because the Negro and the Japanese are so differently constituted that they do not assimilate. If they were given an opportunity the Japanese are quite as capable as the Italians, Armenians, or the Slavs of acquiring our culture, and sharing our national ideals. The trouble is not with the Japanese mind but with the Japanese skin. The “Jap” is not the right colour.

(Park, 1950: 208)

During the interwar years, alongside the rise of fascism, the biologist Julien S. Huxley, ethnologist A.C. Haddon, and sociologist A.M. Carr-Saunders, collaborated to produce *We Europeans* (1936) in which they attacked the alleged scientific basis of race and proposed that the term ‘race’ be replaced with ‘ethnic group’. Despite being introduced by a British academic collaboration, the term would only become popularised almost a decade later following the publication of *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (1945) by the American sociologists William Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole.

It was during this period that the term ‘ethnics’ came to be used, according to Eriksen, as a reference to “Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered to be inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent” (1993: 4). However, the concept of ethnicity did not affect pre-existing racial categories as African Americans, Native Americans, and Asians continued to be classified along racial lines. The term ‘ethnics’ was employed exclusively to describe those that had entered the United States as ‘whites’ yet were considered inferior to the core Anglo-American group—in effect, to those who were white, but not quite. At the time of its emergence, then, an ethnic group signified a subunit of the racial category ‘white’, which in itself symbolised a hierarchy, or class/caste differentiation, within the category itself. Ethnicity was thus not popularised in the United States as an alternative to race but in addition to it in order to account for the varied levels of ‘whiteness’ that existed within America’s white population. Nonwhites belonged to races, but whites could belong to a number of subdivisions, i.e. ethnic groups, within the white racial category.

Both the First and Second World Wars had a profound effect on race-thinking in the United States. The outbreak of the First World War raised concerns regarding the loyalties, and potential for disloyalty, of resident European aliens. Many Americans were alarmed by the number of reservists that, numbering in the thousands, returned to Europe to fight for their respective homelands (Gleason, 1981). German aliens and Americans of German descent were viewed with much suspicion, as were other aliens that did not declare a desire to naturalise. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 further added to questions regarding the loyalties of those of southern and eastern European origin.

Government reaction to this state of affairs was two-pronged. First came the intensification of Americanization campaigns aimed at assimilating recently-arrived European immigrants and their offspring in an effort to strip them of their 'foreignness' and to ensure that they identified exclusively with the United States. The second response came in the form of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act passed with the aim of limiting further immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The Act essentially prevented southern and eastern European immigrant groups from replenishing themselves and, as a result, and in conjunction with aggressive Americanization campaigns, an entire generation of immigrant children became Americanized and distanced from their immigrant cultural roots. The interwar years thus played a pivotal role in the 'whitening' of many of the more recent European immigrant groups.

If the First World War had drawn attention to the status of white ethnic groups in American society then the Second World War similarly highlighted the plight of America's racial minorities. Many of Nazi Germany's more sinister activities were based upon America's very own brand of scientific racism. Hitler was particularly inspired by Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) and put into practice many of his ideas on racial purity. Eugenics theory, which underpinned America's anti-miscegenation laws, was utilised by the Third Reich to forcibly sterilise undesirables and, ultimately, to the extermination of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and the handicapped. The then popular notion of white Nordic superiority also inspired the *Lebensborn Society*—a eugenics-based human breeding project whose primary objective was to produce racially pure, blonde-haired, and blue-eyed Aryans that would symbolise and perpetuate the 'master race'.

Nazi Germany's abhorrent treatment of many sections of its populace thus forced the United States authorities to look inward and to reconsider its own treatment of racial minorities. The Second World War had been the first to enlist African Americans into the armed forces that had essentially fought for the liberty of strangers abroad whilst living under institutionalised racism at home. Before the end of the Second World War, Ashley Montagu, a British academic resident in America, published *Man's Most Dangerous*

*Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1942), and China's alliance with the United States during the war had led in 1943 to the passing of the Magnuson Act, or Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act, which for the first time in American history permitted the naturalisation of Chinese residents in the United States.

Following the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to replace the ineffective League of Nations, the cultural arm of the UN—the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)—assembled a group of internationally-renowned academics to debunk both scientific racism and the alleged scientific basis of race. Headed by Julian S. Huxley, a statement was issued in 1950 proclaiming UNESCO's intended research which was later published in a series of pamphlets entitled *The Race Question in Modern Science* between 1951 and 1953. Both Montagu's 1942 publication and UNESCO's 1950 statement on race influenced the United States Supreme Court's landmark ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) that overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) ruling bringing an end to Jim Crow Laws. However, it was arguably the study and resulting seminal 1944 publication by the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, that had a decisive influence upon the Supreme Court's ruling. In *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Myrdal states that:

If America in actual practice could show the world a progressive trend by which the Negro finally became integrated into modern democracy, all mankind would be given faith again—it would have reason to believe that peace, progress, and order are feasible.... *America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity.*

(cited in Omi and Winant, 1994: 17; original italics)

It was her insistence on the practical application of the 1954 ruling that led to Rosa Parks' arrest and which instigated the modern civil rights movement.



## Chapter 3 – Approaches to White Ethnic Assimilation

### 3.1 Anglo-conformity and Americanization

Following the establishment of the first English colony in Virginia in 1607 and the arrival of the Pilgrims in Plymouth in 1620 the “religious and political passion which ravaged the British Empire during the whole reign of Charles I drove fresh crowds of sectarians every year to the shores of America” (Tocqueville, [1835] 1998: 18). Sectarians from the British Isles were soon followed by significant numbers of immigrants from the European mainland. In Manhattan Island, in then New Amsterdam, eighteen languages were spoken by 1646, and by 1700 the population of Philadelphia included Danes, Dutch, Finns, French, Germans, Irish, Scots, and Swedes (Parillo, 1994). Despite this degree of heterogeneity, ‘transplanted Englishmen’ constituted in the region of 80 percent of the thirteen colonies’ 210,000-strong European population in 1689. From this time until shortly prior to independence, in conjunction with the intensification of African slavery and an influx of non-English immigrants, the population of the colonies increased twelve-fold to approximately 2.6 million (Parillo, 1994).

Comprehensive Anglo-dominance was not entirely evident from the outset. Settlements founded upon national origin were somewhat the norm rather than the exception. The Dutch comprised one in six residents in the New York-New Jersey region and German, Scotch-Irish and Swedish immigrants also established enclaves, notably in Pennsylvania. Cultural and linguistic enclaves in colonial America were made evident by the existence of such names as New England, New Belgium, New Netherland, New Sweden, New Smyrna, New Hamburg, New Iberia, and New Orleans. The formation of enclaves was not, however, determined solely by national origins and religion also played a significant role in creating and sustaining social divisions, particularly among the Anglo majority. Parillo underlines this religious factionalism as he states that:

Even among the English themselves, divergent religious beliefs created numerous subcultures whose shared sense of identity, social insulation, and endogamy resulted in limited outgroup social interaction. Religion was a far

more meaningful component of everyday life in the 18th century and a cause for outgroup prejudice and avoidance.

(Parillo, 1994: 526)

Irish and German Catholics, though initially modest in number, were distinguished from their higher-status Protestant compatriots and religious sermons propagated marked spiritual leanings (Sarna, 1978). It was this religious factionalism that inspired Benjamin Franklin to promote secularism and the creation of a 'happy mediocrity' (Carlson, 1987: 3).

The American Revolution was fought and the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were signed and framed respectively by those of almost exclusively British, and primarily English, descent (Glazer, 1993). Recognition of an independent United States by Great Britain with the Treaty of Paris in 1783 signified the launch of Anglo-America's comprehensive political and economic dominance. In that very same year, George Washington opened America's borders by declaring that "the bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions, whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges" (cited in King, 2000: 294). However, Washington's declaration was effectively nullified by the Naturalization Act of 1790 which excluded non-whites from citizenship and imposed a two-year residency condition upon white aliens that wished to naturalise. Immigration records began in 1819 and in the period 1820-1860 the number of immigrants entering the United States averaged over 125,000 per annum. The arrival of large numbers of Irish Catholics following the Irish potato famine prompted the nativist Protestant working-class to form the Native American Party in the 1840s, which later became known as the 'Know Nothing' movement due to its secretive modus operandi. The extent of anti-Catholic sentiment is underlined by the 'Know Nothing' party winning a quarter of the vote in 1856 and if not for the tenet of slavery, which divided the party into a northern and southern faction, the 'Know Nothings' were on course to win the Presidency (Kaufmann, 2004).

The decisive role played by Anglo-Americans with regard to achieving independence for the nation had led to the consolidation of Anglo-Saxon power and influence:

Through the control of the major social, economic, and political institutions, the English denied to ethnic groups who differed from themselves opportunities to fully participate in the decision-making processes. Only those people who were culturally and racially like Anglo-Saxons received unqualified rights to total societal participation and social acceptance. Thus groups such as the French Huguenots, the Germans, the Irish, and the Scotch Irish were victims of much discrimination in Colonial America.

(Banks and Gay, 1978: 239)

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, concerted efforts had begun to produce results as free public schools had been established in order to bring together those of varying backgrounds for, in Carlson's words, "indoctrination in the Protestant republican ideology" (1987: 4-5). In 1860, the election of America's first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, provoked the secession of the southern states and the commencement of the Civil War in 1861, barely a month after Lincoln's inauguration. The victory of the North in 1865 paved the way for the 'Americanization' of the South:

..., New England school teachers and missionaries flooded into the South under Reconstruction in an attempt to bring Southerners into the republican fold. It was during this period of military occupation that Americanizers helped to spread free public schooling into the South as their remedy for nonconformity.

(Carlson, 1987: 5)

The influx of southern and eastern Europeans from 1880 onward had a profound effect upon pre-existing perceptions of 'whiteness' in America. The Anglo-Saxon core group effectively expanded to include all those of generic British descent whilst those of north-western European origins united against the newcomers whom they deemed, without question, inferior. Many of the new immigrants did not possess national identities upon

arrival—“Immigrants to America maintained close ties with their native villages and regions—but not beyond them” (Sarna, 1978: 371). Many whose identities were determined by regional and/or religious affiliations found themselves collectively categorised from above according to perceived national origin. Catholics could, at times, opt to identify themselves on a national or religious basis but Jews were regarded as such regardless of their exceedingly diverse national origins (Banks and Gay, 1978; Sarna, 1978; Cornell and Hartmann, 1998).

The arrival of large numbers of new immigrants generated significant hostility on the part of native-born Americans and anxiety regarding the assimilability of the new arrivals and their offspring. Anti-immigrant sentiment peaked between 1890 and 1920 alongside another great wave of immigration—over fourteen million from 1901-1920—and it was during this period that, as King contends, the “construction of an Anglo-Saxon conception of the desirable American was consolidated” (2000: 19). The fundamental problem with respect to the new European immigrants was both simple and straightforward: they were “non-Anglo, non-Protestant, non-English-speaking, and non-middle class” (Ropers and Pence, 1995: 48). Americanization programmes were thus instituted in an effort to remould immigrants in the Anglo-American image—to effectively make them honorary Anglo-Saxons—as well as to ensure that the offspring of these immigrants identified exclusively as American. Immigrants and their children were to be recast as Americans by “absorbing American English, American Liberty, and American Protestantism and, ultimately, by intermarrying with Americans” (Kaufmann, 2004: 19).

Efforts to encourage the naturalisation of aliens peaked during the 1920s following legislation in 1918 permitting the Bureau of Naturalisation to actively promote citizenship education. Voluntary organisations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Masons, and American Protective Association (APA) worked tirelessly to encourage and enforce Anglo-American hegemony (Carlson, 1987; Kaufmann, 2004). Immigrant workers in the industrial sector were purposely targeted and by 1919 over

eight hundred industrial plants and factories had incorporated Americanization programmes—instruction in English, citizenship education, and American customs—into their ethos (King, 2000). The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company permitted only employees that were American citizens to vote in their newly-devised employee representative plan, and foreign employees of the Ford Motor Company were required to attend classes before and after work for two days of the working week (Perlmutter, 1999; King, 2000). Adult education had effectively developed into a profession and public programmes teaching English and citizenship studies burgeoned to advance the Americanization process.

Far fewer concerted efforts were required in order to Americanize first- and second-generation immigrant children during this period since the American public school system had been a potent enforcer of conformity since the end of the Civil War:

Early twentieth-century teachers were given little guidance as to how to educate immigrant children, beyond their general charge to “Americanize” them. What this meant was left largely for the teachers themselves to define. In many cities, a major portion of the public school curriculum was devoted to the learning of “good” English and the virtues of cleanliness and health habits, often difficult to put into practice in the tenement houses where city immigrants lived. At the same time, the dress, speech, and personal habits of immigrant children were criticized as “un-American.”

(Dicker, 2003: 65-66)

The xenophobic climate within the public education system was geared toward rapidly purging immigrant children of their foreign traits. The Americanization era was thus primarily concerned with severing the individual’s primary ethnic group tie and enforcing a one-hundred-percent commitment to Americanism.

A key strategic weapon in the enforcement of Anglo-conformity was language. The Germans of Pennsylvania were arguably the first group to raise concerns for being comparatively successful in maintaining their cultural and linguistic enclaves. In 1751,

Benjamin Franklin urged the Anglification of the offspring of Pennsylvania's German settlers by way of arguing "Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs any more than they can acquire our complexion?" (cited in Thernstrom et al (1980: 657). The Dutch language had similarly flourished until English was introduced into Dutch schools in 1774 and the German language suffered the same fate when attempts to have federal laws printed in German and to gain official status for the German language in schools and in the courts were rebuffed in 1796 and 1837 respectively (Kaufmann, 2004). The Louisiana Purchase under Thomas Jefferson in 1803 led to the appointment of an Anglophone governor under whom all public affairs were to be conducted in English—much to the detriment of the state's overwhelming Francophone majority. Following her entry into the Union in 1812, Louisiana's 1845 Constitution had guaranteed bilingualism in state matters but retribution for her support for the Confederacy during the Civil War led to the rewriting of the State Constitution in 1864 and 1868 abolishing French language rights (Crawford, 2000). In California, Spanish language rights were ratified by the 1849 constitution following the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo whereby Mexico ceded much of the American southwest to the United States. But the Vagrancy Act of 1855—popularly known as the 'Greaser Act'—and the 1851 California Land Act requiring declaration of property-ownership in English greatly discriminated against Spanish-speaking Californians (Crawford, 2000).

Similar concerns emerged regarding linguistic heterogeneity following the influx of new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, and the rapid linguistic Anglicisation of the new arrivals and their offspring became an immediate concern. First-generation immigrants soon realised that learning English was the key to upward mobility and the public school system rapidly facilitated the linguistic Anglicisation of their offspring:

Immigrant children were taught that their own nativeness was to be despised and cast aside in favour of all that was "American." Language was an inherent part of

that nativeness, and the sooner one's native language was replaced by English, the brighter one's prospects for success in the new land would be.

(Dicker, 2002: 67-8)

With anti-immigrant sentiment at its peak, the enforcement of Anglo-conformity hastened following the onset of the First World War which resulted in a linguistic assault on all things German. Loyalty to the United States was to be proven, at least in part, via loyalty to the English language and on the eve of the war President Roosevelt declared to German-speakers that "We have room but for one language here, and that is the English language; for we intend to see that the crucible turns out people as Americans, and not as dwellers of a polyglot boarding house" (cited in Portes and Hao, 2002: 889). Suspicion heightened during this period toward those speaking languages other than English. "Linguistic uniformity was seen as essential to rooting out alien conspiracies, Crawford (2000: 21) alleges, and "an ideological link was established between speaking 'good English' and being a 'good American'."

Arguably the most influential exposition of Anglo-conformity is to be found in the American sociologist Milton M. Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (1964) in which he states that Americanization signified a "consciously articulated movement to strip the immigrant of his native culture and attachments and make him over into an American along Anglo-Saxon lines" (1964: 98-9). Gordon did not, however, believe that those who demanded that immigrants conform to Anglo-American ideals were necessarily racist and states that:

-all upholders of Anglo-conformity have not been racists. The non-racist Anglo-conformists presumably are either convinced of the *cultural* superiority of Anglo-Saxon institutions as developed in the United States, or believe simply that, regardless of superiority or inferiority, since English culture has constituted the dominant framework for the development of American institutions, newcomers should expect to adjust accordingly.

(1964: 103-4; original italics)

However, despite his assertion that enforcers of Anglo-conformity were not necessarily racist, Gordon does concede that the goals of the Americanization campaigns were inherently misguided:

Instead of building on the positive values of the immigrant's heritage, emphasising the common denominator of understandings and aspirations which his native background shared with the American and assuring him of the elementary right of self-respect, it flayed his alienness with thinly veiled contempt, ignored his stabilising ties to the groups which made him a person in the sociological sense, and widened the gap between himself and his children.

(1964: 106)

The Americanization era was nevertheless exclusively aimed at bringing the new European immigrants into the mainstream, an opportunity not accorded to non-whites. The historic treatment of Native Americans, African Americans and, later, Chinese, Japanese and Indian immigrants, unveiled the aspirations of policy-makers regarding the future racial composition of American society, particularly regarding who was to be included, and therefore excluded, from the American national identity. Indeed, the imposing dominance of Anglo traditions had much to do with the Anglo-elite's self-conception. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) never did view themselves as a bona fide ethnic group, since warring against the motherland for independence had to be justified upon an alternative principle—political or ideological—since “it was necessary for the rebels and revolutionaries to distinguish themselves from the ethnically identical country against which they were rebelling” (Glazer, 1993: 125). As a result, the core Anglo-elite believed that they constituted a people united by a political ideology that was not determined by lineage. In theory this would suggest that a commitment to the United States' republican ideology was the sole prerequisite to being accepted into the American fold. But the self-conception of Anglo-Americans not as an ethnic group but as an assemblage of individuals united by common principles did not in practice extend to those exhibiting non-Anglo-American cultural characteristics. As a result, despite transplanted English traditions dominating American culture and institutions, Anglo-Americans effectively applied notions of ethnicity to everyone except themselves:



“Indeed, the white Protestant American is rarely conscious of the fact that he inhabits a group at all. *He* inhabits America. The *others* live in groups. One is reminded of the wryly perceptive comment that the fish never discovers water” (Gordon, 1964: 5, original italics).

### 3.2 The Melting Pot

Inspired by a play entitled *The Melting Pot* (1908) by Israel Zangwill, the United States came to be imagined as a melting pot within which different groups with differing histories and traditions would coexist, blending the best that each had to offer in the process of producing the definitive American. The notion that the archetypal American was the result of a melting or fusing process did not originate with Zangwill, but the popularity of his play created a new icon for Americans; a metaphor that could be envisaged as well as one based upon the premise of greater equality and participation for those not of north-western European descent.

The melting pot metaphor surfaced at a time when the assimilation of immigrants had become a national concern. Two great waves of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had raised questions regarding their assimilability, and these questions were being answered with vigorous Americanization campaigns aimed at compelling new immigrants and their young to substitute all foreign traits and loyalties for exclusive American ones. The symbol of the United States as a melting pot was widely embraced and the title to Zangwill’s play was “known to hundreds of thousands who never saw it performed” (Gleason, 1992: 7).

*The Melting-Pot* is essentially a love story concerning David Quixano, a Russian Jew émigré, and Vera Revendal, a Russian Gentile émigré. Their affair seemingly blossoms until David learns that it was Vera’s father that had authorised the pogrom responsible for the deaths of his parents and due to which he had fled to America. However, the doubt that David initially suffers with regard to marrying Vera is dispelled by the end of the play as he declares his faith in the might of the American melting pot. Within the script

lies the dialogue for which the drama is celebrated, and Zangwill's vision of the American melting pot is expressed via David as such:

...America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to—these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

(Zangwill, 1916: 33)

At the time of its release the play was by no means considered a literary masterpiece, but President Roosevelt was among the first-nighters in Washington and despite being critical of certain aspects of the play wrote to Zangwill with the words “I do not know when I have seen a play that stirred me as much” (cited in Gleason, 1992: 7). Zangwill responded by dedicating the play to the President, who had undoubtedly been stirred by the play's unequivocal praise for America and its endorsement of comprehensive immigrant assimilation. It was America as the “great Melting-Pot,” Zangwill declared, “where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming.” It is also clear that those melted within the American pot would constitute a superior type seeing that the main character asserts that “the real American has not yet arrived” and that “he will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman” (1916: 34).

However, despite being widely embraced as a symbol of unity, Zangwill's drama far from presented a clear-cut theory on assimilation in the United States beyond the simple supposition that intermarriage would melt all into one. This ambiguity is addressed by Gordon (1964) as he states that:

Indeed, the very concept is one which singularly lends itself to expression in vague rhetoric which, however noble its aims, gives minimal clues as to the exact

implications of the term for the manifold spheres of societal organization and behaviour.

(1964: 124)

The melting pot was certainly an alluring symbol widely embraced and promoted as America's destiny, yet how it was to be realised was not entirely clear—a fact that did not appear to concern those that endorsed it. Gleason (1992) draws attention to the ambiguities surrounding the melting pot concept by questioning whether it was a “symbol of fusion or confusion.” To Gleason, the melting pot symbol was never clear regarding who was to melt—immigrants and/or natives—and never clarified as to whether biological or cultural assimilation constituted the ultimate outcome. Zangwill partly sheds light on his own stance with respect to this question as he asserts in the play's *Afterword* that “The process of American amalgamation is not assimilation or simple surrender to the dominant type, as is popularly supposed, but an all-round give-and-take by which the final type may be enriched or impoverished” (1916: 203). However, Zangwill's view of the melting pot was founded upon two idealistic presumptions—that Americans would respect foreign cultures and would be eager to learn from immigrants; and that immigrants would will their own assimilation and ardently strive to learn the finer elements of existing American ways. As Hirschman contends, “This romantic vision of American society will strike most modern observers as both naïve and rather patronizing—because of the implicit assumption that most immigrants and their descendants are anxious to shed their social and cultural heritage” (1983: 397).

Although biological assimilation, i.e. intermarriage, could ultimately have given rise to a single common culture, cultural assimilation is in theory possible without it. Hence, it is unclear whether the melting pot metaphor was intended to embrace the notion of a populace with a single culture or one with indefinable origins as a result of widespread intermarriage that would inexorably give rise to an entirely new and unique culture. Either way, Zangwill's chief oversight, and arguably also that of those who endorsed America as a melting pot, was the presumption of a consensus on the subject of assimilation—that both immigrants and natives desired to melt.

In view of the nation as a whole, however, the biological-assimilationist approach to the melting pot symbol was inherently flawed since it is clear that in reality both assimilation and the melting pot were reserved for whites only. The assimilation of recent white ethnic immigrants was undoubtedly the desired goal of the melting pot symbol. Indeed, according to Linda Alcoff, “the melting pot failed to diminish racial hierarchies because it was never really intended to include different races; no proponent of the melting pot ideology ever promoted miscegenation” (1995: 145). Laws forbidding marriages between blacks and whites would not be widely repealed until 1967.

The paradox surrounding the melting pot metaphor is that both the reason why it was widely embraced as well as the grounds upon which it would come to be discredited in the 1960s and 1970s may be one and the same. It is highly unlikely that older stock Americans that endorsed the melting pot ever considered the prospect of melting themselves—it was immigrants that were expected to assimilate or melt and to adopt American ways and norms. It is this likelihood that came to be employed in order to discredit the melting pot, since if in reality only immigrants were expected to melt then there is little that differentiates the melting pot from notions of Anglo-conformity. In fact, this is underlined by the activities of the Ford Motor Company’s English School which, following its inception in 1915, organised a ‘melting pot pageant’ for its immigrant workers during which employees entered a large cauldron from the rear in native national dress and emerged from the front wearing a business suit, waving an American flag in one hand and clutching naturalisation papers in the other (Gleason, 1992; King, 2000; Kivisto, 2002). It was clear then, at least to the Ford Motor Company, that Anglo-conformity and melting pot symbolism were essentially one and the same. It is thus Gleason’s view that:

Yet with all its liberality and tolerance, the cosmopolitan version of the melting pot was still a theory of assimilation. The idea that immigrants must change was basic; they were to become new people. The American identity might not be fully formed, but it was far from indeterminate. Some of its features were established by the basic political ideology, others were more vague, deriving in tacit manner from the majority culture and the evolving experience of the national community. This

was the nationality into which the immigrants and their children were expected to merge.

(Gleason, 1981: 38)

There are thus two distinct readings with respect to the popularity of the melting pot metaphor. One approach is that older stock Americans that endorsed the melting pot did so without ever considering the prospect of melting themselves. In effect, the melting pot symbol was a deception—a way of encouraging immigrants to conform to existing American norms under the guise of a reciprocal process. If this is to be assumed as true, then the melting pot symbol was, from the outset, merely camouflaging Anglo-conformity. An alternative and less sinister approach questions the feasibility of the melting process upon consideration of the geopolitics of the United States. The melting process could realistically have taken place only if the United States halted immigration for a significant period of time, which eventually came to pass via the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Until the passing of the Act, then, it is likely that assimilation could only be, in the short run at least, unidirectional. If this surmise is accepted as true, then Americans that endorsed the melting pot concept may have done so in good faith without fully realising its implausibility.

To Gordon (1964), however, the melting pot symbol had been illusory from the outset and, in his view, “rather than an impartial melting of the divergent cultural patterns from all immigrant sources, what has actually taken place has been more of a transforming of the later immigrant’s specific cultural contributions into the Anglo-Saxon mould” (1964: 127). But the melting that did occur among white ethnics in twentieth-century pre-Civil Rights America was significantly aided by the aforementioned Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. This immigration bill, which came into effect in 1929, favoured western European and Nordic immigrants and imposed fixed quotas on immigrants from outside the western hemisphere. The impact of immigration restrictions for the majority of white ethnics was such that:

..., the immigration hiatus between the 1920s and 1960s severed the homeland ties

of the third- and fourth-generation ethnic offspring of immigrants, which meant that they became increasingly unfamiliar with their homeland cultures, a key to the fact that they were progressively Americanized. Levels of prejudice and discrimination declined, as a redrawing of the racial boundaries resulted in the expansion of groups who were considered to be white. In this new dispensation, the racial category white became a synonym for European-origin.

(Kivisto, 2002: 57-58)

The immigration restrictions thus acted as a barrier against a replenishing source of new immigrants as white ethnics of numerous national origins were denied entry into the United States. The result was the homogenisation and Americanization of an entire generation which became further removed from its respective ancestral homelands and ethnic cultures and subsequently became progressively incorporated into mainstream white society.

It is evident that in the first half of the twentieth century the symbol of the American melting pot was believed to encompass *E pluribus unum*—to create, in one way or another, one people out of many. Zangwill envisaged this to be achieved via intermarriage since he believed it to be the route to eliminating historic enmities and to generating a unified populace. The blending of different peoples into one, on the premise that ancestral cultures would be lost en route, was to bequeath a uniquely American common culture. However, the melting pot, with respect to nonwhites, was in all probability never intended to become a reality since the popular notion of America as a melting pot did not take into account the various barriers against intermarriage—particularly racial ones. What the immigration act of 1924 achieved was to provide ample time for second- and third-generation white ethnics to Americanize, intermarry, and to enter mainstream white America. If anything, this highlighted the racial inequality of the symbol, yet its emergence during the Americanization era nevertheless suggests that it may, from the outset, have simply been a deceptive ploy. Immigrants may have been encouraged to shed their ethnic traits and may have done so presuming it to be a

reciprocal process. But it is inconceivable that, during this era, existing Anglo-American ideals would in any way have been called in to question. Then again, there may have been many that naively embraced and endorsed the idea of an all-encompassing American melting pot, unaware of the multitude of forces acting against it. In view of prevailing attitudes toward non-whites and the general disdain encountered by white ethnics, their inclusion within the melting pot metaphor would have undoubtedly come as a welcome relief. It signified at least the first step toward comprehensive acceptance in their new adopted society.

### 3.3 Cultural Pluralism

Seven years after Zangwill's play opened to theatre audiences, an American Jew by the name of Horace Kallen entered the assimilation debate. Evidently appalled by both the melting pot symbol and attempts by Americanizers to effectively purge immigrants and their offspring of their alleged foreignness, Kallen envisaged and presented an alternative vision of American society. He fervently rejected Zangwill's prophecy that intermarriage would melt Americans of all religions and national origins into one super-race as well as the adoption of the melting pot symbol by Americanizers, thus prompting him to publish his preliminary thoughts on the matter in 1915.

Kallen's ideas initially passed relatively unnoticed barring a small contingent of like-minded scholars. Despite having several prominent advocates, his vision of how ethnicity should be preserved in American life had little impact upon the Americanization campaigns of the time, and the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924 constituted a major setback. This should have come as little surprise since his vision challenged, and in many ways embodied the antithesis of, the establishment's prevailing approach to the assimilation of white ethnic immigrants. His proposition that ethnic groups should maintain and foster their customs and traditions would certainly not have been well-received given the outbreak of the First World War.

Kallen's ideas on cultural pluralism first appeared in essay-form entitled 'Democracy

versus the Melting Pot: A Study of American Nationality' published in *The Nation* in February 1915, although it was not until it was republished with minor changes in 1924 that he coined the term 'cultural pluralism' (Gleason, 1992). His preliminary ideas were published at the height of the Americanization era when nativism and one-hundred-percent-Americanism were at their peak following the suspicion and paranoia that erupted with the onset of the First World War and, later, the Bolshevik Revolution. Immigrants and their young that had arrived with the great waves from southern and eastern Europe at the turn of the century were the key target-group subjected to aggressive Americanization campaigns, and Kallen was repulsed by both the practices of the Americanizers and the melting pot metaphor and it was this revulsion that motivated him to deliberate upon the future of ethnic groups in the United States.

At a time when the goal of unity and uniformity was being actively pursued, Kallen, for one, did not adhere to notions of the United States as a single, homogeneous entity. His references to the United States in the plural 'are' as opposed to the singular 'is' underlines his view that the United States was not one nation but a federation of states encompassing a great deal of diversity. Kallen was impressed by the persistence of ethnic groups and traditions in America and this feature is likely to have contributed to his conviction that ethnicity and ancestry were correspondingly primordial and inescapable:

What is inalienable in the life of mankind is its intrinsic positive quality—its psycho-physical inheritance. Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers. Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, would have to cease to be, while they could cease to be citizens or church members or carpenters or lawyers without ceasing to be. The selfhood which is inalienable in them, and for the realization of which they require "inalienable" liberty is ancestrally determined, and the happiness which they pursue has its form implied in ancestral endowment.

(Kallen 1915: 114-15)

"Birth, which we do not choose," Kallen argued, "carries with it simultaneously certain



cultural acquirements of a nature so basic, so primary, as to be indistinguishable from inheritance” (1915: 176-77). Thus, according to Kallen, membership of an ethnic group is the only form of group membership that is involuntary. From all others the individual can secede by choice but ancestral endowments are eternal—a form of ethnic predestination; the only constant in the life of the individual. Melting in the American pot and/or coercive assimilatory practices was thus futile and would lead only to repression and despair since individuals are ultimately unable to escape the psycho-physical inheritance that fundamentally guides them. Rather than assimilation, Kallen proposed that America’s national groups be fostered and protected. His American utopia was thus not one characterised by conformity but one that embodied harmony between the diverse elements that constituted the United States—“a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind” (1915: 116):

As in an orchestra every type of instrument has its specific *timbre* and *tonality*, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society, each ethnic group may be the natural instrument, its temper and culture may be its theme and melody and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all may make the symphony of civilization.

(Kallen 1915: 116-17; original italics)

Immigrants, according to Kallen, thus had a choice of whether to assimilate and march to the tune of Anglo-America or to strive for harmony amid the various melodies being played within the extremely diverse American orchestra. All would coexist within a common political, economic, and civic framework with English as the lingua franca, but “each nationality would have for its emotional and involuntary life its own peculiar dialect or speech, its own individual and inevitable esthetic and intellectual forms” (1915: 116). Kallen’s ideal United States was an enlarged and more diverse version of Switzerland which he regarded to be “the most successful democracy in the world” (1915: 114). In essence, his argument rests upon the premise that ethnic groups should participate and cooperate within a common public sphere but be allowed to foster ethnic

traditions and identities within the private sphere free of assimilatory pressures.

From the title of his 1915 essay, it is abundantly clear that Kallen was not only critical of the melting pot vision of America but that he also considered it to be exceedingly undemocratic. The efforts of Americanizers to achieve conformity via aggressive Americanization campaigns and symbols such as the melting pot, in his view, contravened the democratic ideals upon which the nation was founded, and he undoubtedly believed his ideas on cultural pluralism to genuinely embrace the true spirit of Americanism. To Kallen, the attainment of harmony as opposed to conformity:

...would do no violence to the ideals of the American fundamental law and the spirit of American institutions nor to the equalities of men....Taking for its point of departure the existing ethnic and cultural groups it would seek to provide conditions under which each might attain the cultural perfection that is *proper to its kind*. The provision of such conditions has been said to be the primary intent of American fundamental law and the function of American institutions.

(Kallen 1915: 112-3, original italics)

Thus, Anglo-conformity and the melting pot appear to have been equally injudicious to Kallen and a ‘democracy of nationalities’ represented the clearest exposition of Americanism—“In a certain sense, Americanism as a social ideal could be identified with the ideal of culture. To be a citizen of the United States would then be the same in value as being a citizen of the world” (1915: 56).

Kallen’s vision, however, far from constituted a genuine theory of assimilation. Beyond describing his utopia, he did little to develop his ideas or to outline how cultural pluralism could be realised in American society, leading to allegations that his work was more an idealistic vision than a bona fide sociological analysis. Gleason, for one, maintains that Kallen “left the entire political dimension woefully underdeveloped from the theoretical standpoint” (1981: 44), and according to Gordon (1964):

... Kallen's body of work on the cultural pluralism idea, remarkable and germinal as it is, tends to be embodied in a general framework of rhetoric and philosophical analysis which has not pushed to the fore that kind of rigorous sociological inquiry which the crucial importance of the idea ultimately demands.

(1964: 149)

Indeed, Kallen's ideas were neither well-presented nor unveiled in a form that could in any way be implemented. His conviction regarding the primordial character of ethnicity also exposed him to extensive criticism since his stance appears to have sanctioned the extensive racist thinking characteristic of his time. Kallen did in fact adhere to racial categories and did believe there to be hereditary racial traits that characterised members of specific groups. According to Gleason (1981), Kallen's racialism possessed something of a romantic quality founded upon an appreciation of diversity, and did not attempt to rank groups on any kind of racial hierarchy. Similarly, Gordon also claims that in Kallen's work "There is no attribution of superiority or inferiority in these racial references—simply differences" (1964: 150).

Nevertheless, primordialism was not Kallen's sole questionable assumption. He also firmly believed that ethnic groups in the United States would perpetuate indefinitely—presumably as a result of their primordial and inescapable ethnic predestination—yet he did not clarify exactly how ethnic groups were to protect themselves from mainstream intrusions. Gordon (1964) maintains that Kallen did not wish for ethnic groups to become isolated and ghettoised and that he endorsed interaction. Yet Kallen was vehemently opposed to any degree of dissolution with respect to ethnic communities. His utopia was also one that was free of any prejudice or discrimination, yet how they were to be eliminated was never expanded upon.

An additional argument is made that, to some, fundamentally discredits Kallen's brand of cultural pluralism from the outset. Analogous to allegations made against the melting pot concept, Kallen's cultural pluralism also seemingly excludes blacks from its blueprint. Glazer draws attention to the lack of references to blacks in Kallen's publications and

claims that cultural pluralists “had little to say, indeed nothing to say, about adding blacks to the series of groups who they felt had every right to maintain their separate identity. Maybe they believed blacks should; maybe they never thought of them: they just never entered them into the argument” (1993: 130). Kallen’s cultural pluralism was in all probability formulated entirely with southern and eastern Europeans in mind for they were those commonly regarded as ‘ethnic’. Hence, Kallen’s vision may be as discreditable as the melting pot symbol that he opposed with such vehemence.

Many of the shortcomings in Kallen’s hypothesis elucidate why his ideas initially passed for the most part unnoticed save a number of liberals and progressives for whom the aggressive Americanization campaigns had comprehensively discredited the melting pot symbol. In 1924, the year in which Kallen coined the term ‘cultural pluralism’, the Johnson-Reed Act was passed implementing national origins quotas with regard to those eligible to enter the United States. The passing of the law, according to King, signified “the rejection of a cultural pluralist approach to identity” (2000: 36). However, the concept of ‘cultural pluralism’ was reintroduced in *Our Racial and National Minorities* in 1937 by Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek, but with no mention of Kallen (Gleason, 1992). By the 1950s, Kallen had reassessed his position and in a 1956 publication had eradicated all traces of primordialism and included all forms of cultural groups—not just ethnic ones—within his pluralistic vision. By that time, however, assimilation itself had become less of a concern. Immigration restrictions had resulted in the successful Americanization of an entire generation and this, alongside Nazi atrocities during the Second World War that had highlighted the dangers of intolerance, had led to a more relaxed atmosphere on the subject of cultural diversity and pluralism.

### 3.3.1 Trans-nationality

Randolph Bourne, a writer and public intellectual, sympathised with Kallen and acknowledged that his ideas on cultural pluralism had inspired his own 1916 essay entitled ‘Trans-National America’ (Hollinger, 2000). Like Kallen, Bourne was vehemently against Anglo-conformity and melting pot symbolism. However, unlike

Kallen who was a German-born Jew, Bourne was of old American stock—neither foreign-born nor a member of a religious minority.

The outbreak of nationalist sentiment amongst white ethnic immigrants following the onset of the First World War was evidence enough to Bourne that attempts to assimilate them had failed. In fact, Bourne begins his essay by declaring that “No reverberatory effect of the great war has caused American public opinion more solicitude than the failure of the ‘melting-pot’” (1916: 93). It was his view that assimilation had achieved the opposite effect—instead of eliminating ethnic identities, it had in fact heightened them. As a result, to Bourne, a new approach was required to direct the future American nationality.

Several key similarities exist between Bourne’s ‘trans-national America’ and Kallen’s ‘democracy of nationalities’. Like Kallen, Bourne similarly disputed the existence of a generic American national culture:

With the exception of the South and that New England which, like the Red Indian, seems to be passing into solemn oblivion, there is no distinctively American culture. It is apparently our lot rather to be a federation of cultures. This we have been for half a century, and the war has made it ever more evident that this is what we are destined to remain.

(Bourne, 1916: 100)

Hence, akin to Kallen’s ‘democracy of nationalities’, Bourne argued that the United States was characterised by a “federation of cultures” (1916: 102). Moreover, Bourne’s trans-national America was also one that embodied internationalism and one that was representative of all nations and all peoples:

What we have achieved has been rather a cosmopolitan federation of national colonies, of foreign cultures, from whom the sting of devastating competition has been removed. America is already the world federation in miniature, the continent where for the first time in history has been achieved that miracle of hope, the

peaceful living side by side, with character substantially preserved, of the most heterogeneous peoples under the sun.

(Bourne, 1916: 102)

Analogous to Kallen's 'orchestration of mankind', then, Bourne believed that a trans-national America would "liberate and harmonize the creative power of all these peoples and give them the new spiritual citizenship, as so many individuals have already been given, of a world" (1916: 107). It is evident that Bourne believed, as Kallen did, that American nationality was tantamount to global citizenship.

Bourne also appears to have agreed with Kallen's conviction that Anglo-conformity and melting pot ideology contravened the democratic principles of Americanism:

Surely we cannot be certain of our spiritual democracy when, claiming to melt the nations within us to a comprehension of our free and democratic institutions, we fly into panic at the first sign of their own will and tendency. We act as if we wanted Americanization to take place only on our own terms, and not by the consent of the governed.

(Bourne, 1916: 94)

"The Anglo-Saxon attempt to fuse will only create enmity and distrust," Bourne claimed, and "It is not the Jew who sticks proudly to the faith of his fathers and boasts of that venerable culture of his who is dangerous to America, but the Jew who has lost the Jewish fire and become a mere elementary, grasping animal" (1916: 99). Anglo-conformity, according to Kallen, would lead to repression and despair; to Bourne it constituted a potential threat. Any attempt at Americanizing immigrants thus had to be a reciprocal process, and it is this notion that distinguishes Bourne from Kallen. Unlike Kallen who believed ethnic groups to be fixed, distinct and eternal, Bourne drew attention to a dynamic interaction that would alter the ethnic group as well as American culture at large. Hence, over time, both would be positively transformed via "a constant process of reinvention" (Kivisto, 2002: 83). Indeed, in his seminal paper Bourne argues that all Americans are "foreign born or the descendants of foreign-born, and if

distinctions are to be made between us they should rightly be on some other ground than indigenoussness” (1916: 94). In his view, to expect immigrants to conform to Anglo-American ideals was hypocritical since the early settlers could hardly be said to have arrived in America in order to learn from, and to adopt the culture of, America’s Native Indians. Bourne argues that the early settlers had arrived in search of freedom and fortune and subsequently transplanted half-baked aspects of a pre-existing social framework upon American soil.

The truth is that no more tenacious cultural allegiance to the mother country has been shown by any alien nation than by the ruling class of Anglo-Saxon descendants in these American States.... He has never really ceased to be the descendant of immigrants, nor has he ever succeeded in transforming that colony into a real nation, with a tenacious, richly woven fabric of native culture. Colonials from the other nations have come and settled down beside him. They found no definite native culture which should startle them out of their colonialism, and consequently they looked back to their mother-country, as the earlier Anglo-Saxon immigrant was looking back to his.

(Bourne, 1916: 95/97)

It is evident that Bourne believed that all immigrants should be accorded the same rights possessed by the earlier settlers and should not be coerced into a supposed American mould. Yet neither Kallen’s cultural pluralism nor Bourne’s trans-nationality were persuasive enough to detract from the mythical quality of the melting pot and, arguably, the reality of Anglo-conformity. Within the context of the aggressive Americanization campaigns of the time, both were largely ignored. However, their concepts would emerge with significant relevance and force several decades later following the onset of the Civil Rights movement.

### 3.4 The Expansion of Whiteness

As aforementioned in Chapter 2, the new white ethnic immigrants were initially regarded as racially inferior to previous immigrant groups of north-western European descent, save

the Irish Catholics. Madison Grant, one of the key exponents of Scientific Racism claimed that “Our jails, insane asylums, and almshouses are filled with this human flotsam and the whole tone of American life, social, moral, and political, has been lowered and vulgarised by them” (cited in Kivisto, 2002: 47). Yet the new immigrants were not perceived as a homogeneous whole, and some groups were regarded as more easily assimilable than others—light-skinned versus dark-skinned—and this undoubtedly affected their rate of incorporation into the mainstream.

Despite entering the United States as a racial anomaly, viewed as a cut above non-whites but undoubtedly inferior to the dominant white majority, the concerted efforts of Americanizers proved that southern and eastern Europeans were essentially considered to be, for the most part, assimilable. The vast majority had immigrated to the United States in order to meet the demand for unskilled labour in the manufacturing sector brought about by industrialisation and any efforts to incorporate them into white society could only have been a welcomed relief. This would undoubtedly have been due to the almost immediate realisation of the immense costs associated with being considered non-white in American society. As a result, the assimilation of white ethnic immigrant groups was very much a two-way process—the authorities unveiled Americanization programmes aimed at educating immigrants in American ways, and immigrant groups actively campaigned to prove that they were more than deserving of membership in White America. This involved distancing themselves from non-white groups and embracing the values and mores associated with being white. After all, efforts to Americanize white ethnics emerged in the very same period that witnessed the U.S. Supreme Court’s rulings against *Ozawa* and *Thind*, denying eligibility to naturalise for Japanese and Indian immigrants respectively.

The immigration hiatus brought about by the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, and later intensified by the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression of the 1930s, led to relative calm regarding immigration concerns. In 1945, Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole advanced the notion that southern and eastern European immigrant groups should be regarded as ‘ethnic groups’, and by the end of the Second World War such groups had



effectively been promoted from being regarded as ‘white races’ to being accepted as ‘ethnics’. This broadening of the ‘white’ category to explicitly incorporate those white ethnic groups whose racial status had previously been questioned signified an acceptance that such groups differed only in minor respects from the dominant white group and correspondingly differed in far greater respects from America’s non-white minorities. In effect, by this time, such groups had come to be accepted as categorically more white than non-white and although the adjectival term ‘ethnic’ may not have completely raised public perceptions of such groups to a level par with the Anglo core, the new immigrant groups had successfully climbed up a number of rungs on the ladder of whiteness which, needless to say, was a far more favourable position to not being on it at all. It is thus Jacobson’s contention that:

...it is not just that various white immigrant groups’ economic success came at the expense of nonwhites, but that they owe their now stabilised and broadly recognised whiteness itself in part to these nonwhite groups.

(1998: 9, original italics)

The post-war period also played a crucial role in the further ‘whitening’ of southern and eastern European immigrant groups. Having formed the backbone of the manufacturing classes for much of the early-twentieth century, the two decades of economic boom that followed the end of the Second World War enabled numerous white ethnics to move up from blue-collar to white-collar jobs. The G.I. Bill of 1944, which made funds available to war veterans, also enabled those white ethnics that had participated in the war effort to get a college education, buy their own homes, and start small businesses. As a result, the post-war period facilitated significant upward mobility for white ethnics that had previously embodied the labouring classes. To many, the mere fact that such upward mobility was achievable for white ethnics was evidence enough of their categorical entry and acceptance into White America. Post-war prosperity and the immigration hiatus had resulted in the redrawing of America’s racial boundaries as the category ‘white’ came to embrace all those of European descent. That is not to say that prejudice and/or

discrimination toward white ethnics was eliminated in its entirety, but the level faced was pale in comparison to that faced by white ethnic groups a mere half-century ago, and even more so when compared to that which non-white groups continued to face. Americanization campaigns had been a resounding success and, undoubtedly aided by the halt in immigration, significant levels of intermarriage lent weight to the symbol of the American melting pot, at least in relation to whites. By the time the Civil Rights movement began to gather momentum, it was widely presumed that the incorporation of white ethnics into the core white majority was essentially complete. As a result, they were presumed to have achieved a semblance of equality that non-white Americans could only dream of.

## Part II – The Revolution

## Chapter 4 - The Revolution: Racial, Ethnic and Cultural

### 4.1 Civil Rights and Black Power

The 1950s and 1960s, epitomised by the civil rights movement, was unquestionably one of the most tumultuous periods in modern American history. The movement itself, however, can be said to have begun in modest form several decades earlier following the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling which legally-sanctioned racial segregation in all public domains. Objection to what came to be known as Jim Crow Laws initially emerged in a predominantly non-violent fashion, characterised by organisations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and the National Urban League. Co-founded in 1909 by W.E.B. Du Bois, the principal strategy of the NAACP was to utilise the judiciary to mount legal challenges to the segregation of all public facilities as endorsed by the 1896 ruling. Much of the efforts of the NAACP were also allocated to investigating the lynching of blacks which had become an alarmingly common occurrence in the South. The extrajudicial lynching and execution of blacks was on the rise particularly following the release of D.W. Griffith's controversial film *Birth of a Nation* in 1915 which promoted white supremacy and glorified the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The NAACP organised a nationwide protest against the film and against the vigilante activities that were on the rise as a result of the KKK revival. Strategic challenges to racial segregation also emerged from the Trade Union sector and in 1925 the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was founded and, led by A. Phillip Randolph, became the first black-led union within the American Federation of Labour (AFL). During the first half of the twentieth century some measured success was achieved by way of the Fair Employment Act of 1941 prohibiting racial discrimination in the defence industries, the Supreme Court ruling of 1946 outlawing segregated seating on interstate buses, and a 1948 Executive Order by President Truman establishing equal treatment in the Armed Forces.

However, the decisive turning point came in 1954 following the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, a landmark case backed by the NAACP's Legal Defence Fund, that the racial segregation of elementary

schools violated the equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment, thereby overthrowing the 1896 ruling. In December of the following year, Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to surrender her seat to a white person. Her arrest triggered the Montgomery Bus Boycott which lasted a little over a year until the city's buses were desegregated in 1956. The boycott also made one of its organisers, a young Baptist minister by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr., into a national figure. King went on to become President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) founded soon after the boycott ended with the aim of promoting non-violent protest against racial segregation (Conway, 1968; Rustin, 1976).

Despite the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, many southern states refused to abide by it. In September 1957, Little Rock Central High School became the focal point in the struggle to desegregate southern schools when the Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, ordered the state's National Guard to prevent nine black students from entering school property. President Eisenhower was forced to intervene and send Paratroopers and Federal National Guardsmen to enforce desegregation laws and facilitate the entry of the 'Little Rock Nine' (Goldston, 1968; Rustin, 1976). Similar incidents would take place just a few years later when President Kennedy would be forced to send federal troops to the University of Mississippi to safeguard the entry of their first black student, and when the pro-segregationist Governor George Wallace took steps to prevent the enrolment of black students at the University of Alabama.

While more established organisations like the NAACP continued to fight for equality for blacks through the courts by utilising the *Brown* ruling as a precedent, newer youth-based organisations began to emerge intent upon openly challenging segregation laws in the South through non-violent acts of civil disobedience (Kivisto, 2002). The first of such acts came in February 1960 when four black college students sat down and waited to be served at a 'whites only' lunch counter at a Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Despite not being served, the students returned daily and in larger numbers (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1999). This form of protest became known as "sit-ins" and spread across the nation following media coverage. The subsequent desegregation of

numerous lunch counters proved that equal treatment could be achieved via direct challenges at the grassroots level.

The coordinators of the sit-ins formed the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) whose next major undertaking was to test the desegregation of the public transportation system since the 1946 Supreme Court ruling had for the most part been ignored at state-level in much of the South. With sponsorship from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), civil rights activists boarded buses in 1961 with the aim of completing a “Freedom Ride” to the Deep South—the heartland of the KKK. However, the “Freedom Riders” were subjected to physical assaults and imprisonment as southern states applied local segregation laws barring blacks from occupying white-only areas and following a particularly violent outburst in Montgomery, Alabama, President Kennedy was forced to send in Federal Marshals to protect the activists from further violence (Carson, 1981). Following a petition to the Interstate Commerce Commission from Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the racial desegregation of bus terminals was realised later that same year.

While the NAACP continued to battle in the courtrooms and organisations like CORE and the SNCC endeavoured to effect change through acts of civil disobedience, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the SCLC concentrated on focusing the nation’s attention via a number of non-violent protest marches for which he was frequently arrested. His arrest in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 resulted in him writing his well-known ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ in which he endorsed protest marches and acts of civil disobedience as means by which to effect change. Several weeks later, President Kennedy announced his proposal for civil rights legislation and subsequently submitted his proposed Civil Rights Act for congressional approval.

It was in the summer of 1963 that the entire nation’s focus would be drawn to the campaign as leading civil rights organisations coalesced to organise the ‘March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom’. The organisers had hoped for an attendance of 100,000 but it is estimated that at least double that number congregated at the Lincoln

Memorial (Rustin, 1976). The leaders of every major black civil rights organisation addressed the crowd but it was King that rounded off the march as keynote speaker with his celebrated 'I Have a Dream' speech to rapturous applause. Before the year was out, however, four young girls had been killed in the bombing of a black church in Birmingham, Alabama, and the assassination of President Kennedy raised concerns as to whether his death signified the end to civil rights reform.

The movement itself nevertheless soldiered on and in 1964 the NAACP, SNCC, and CORE launched their "Freedom Summer" campaign aimed at ending the political disenfranchisement of blacks in several southern states by registering as many blacks to vote as possible (Kivisto, 2002). Their key target was Mississippi which had among the lowest rates of black voter-registration nationwide. The campaign was marred, however, by the brutal abduction, torture and murder of three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi, of whom two were Jewish-Americans from the North, following their arrest for speeding by local police. In that same summer, Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act after President Johnson pushed through his predecessor's vision with respect to improving the status of blacks in American society. This was the most comprehensive civil rights act to date which prohibited discrimination in all public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal. In the following year the 1965 Voting Rights Act was also approved thereby outlawing pre-requisites such as literacy tests and poll taxes that had previously inhibited many blacks from voting in the South, and an Executive Order was issued by President Johnson sanctioning the practice of affirmative action in all areas of hiring and employment.

At the same time that such breakthroughs were being achieved, however, a parallel and distinctly more radical movement emerged claiming that the only route to equality for blacks was not by means of integration but through independence. The roots of this black nationalism can be traced back to the 1920s when Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican that had arrived in the United States in 1905, established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and from its headquarters in Harlem actively renounced integration

and campaigned instead for the formation of an independent black nation. Garvey's primary aim was to unite blacks and to generate a sense of black pride with an emphasis on common pan-African roots, and he even launched a 'Back to Africa' campaign which encouraged blacks to snub American society for a newer and better life in Africa. The UNIA secured widespread support for its own brand of black nationalism and at its height in the early-1920s boasted a membership numbering in the millions (Omi and Winant, 1994). Despite this, however, few blacks saw any reason to 'return' to Africa and Garvey's movement ground to a halt when he was convicted of fraud in 1925 and deported back to Jamaica in 1927 following a presidential pardon (Goldston, 1968). In the 1960s, Garvey's ideas were resurrected by Stokely Carmichael following his rise to the leadership of the SNCC in 1966 with his espousal of 'Black Power'. Another key player in the more radical side of the civil rights movement was Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI) whose most prolific spokesperson, Malcolm X, advocated the realisation of equality for blacks "by any means necessary." Malcolm X attracted mass black support unparalleled since the 1920s and spoke out against the integrationist aspirations of the civil rights movement's leading organisations and figures with such rhetoric as "*White people follow King. White people pay King. White people subsidise King. White people support King. But the masses of black people don't support Martin Luther King*" (cited in Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1999: 169, original italics). Malcolm X left the NOI in 1964 following a disagreement with Muhammad and founded the Organisation for Afro-American Unity before he was assassinated in 1965. He had, however, done enough to inspire Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to form the Black Panther Party in 1966, a socialist revolutionary group that would become synonymous with violence.

The mid- to late-1960s was in fact an exceedingly violent and tempestuous period. Widespread disenchantment amongst blacks due to unfulfilled expectations and the perceived slowness of integration fuelled urban riots across the nation starting with the Harlem/Bedford-Stuyvesant riot of 1964. Other major riots include the Watts riot in Los Angeles in 1965 and Newark, New Jersey in 1967. All in all, violence erupted in over 125 major cities across the United States which required 70,000 troops to subdue (Smith,



1982). The violence resulted in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars worth of property damage (Kivisto, 2002). The Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 prohibiting discrimination in the purchasing or renting of property, but with the assassinations of King and Robert Kennedy in the same year, in conjunction with an FBI crackdown aimed at eliminating black dissident organisations such as the Black Panthers, the movement began to grind to a halt.

To describe the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement as ‘revolutionary’ is by no means an overstatement. Since the very founding of the Republic, great emphasis had been placed on individual rights and particularly upon the eighteenth-century Enlightenment notions of popular sovereignty and the individual’s inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Central to the nation’s ethos was the motto *E pluribus Unum*—from many, one—which encapsulated the Founding Fathers’ vision of creating a single, unified populace from the multiplicity of groups that had made the New World their home. The notion that specific group rights were to all intents and purposes ‘un-American’ is underlined by President Wilson’s speech at a naturalisation ceremony in 1915, undoubtedly prompted by immigrant reactions following the commencement of the First World War:

You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American.

(cited in Schlesinger, 1998: 41)

Despite Wilson’s assertion, however, American history was in fact riddled with cases of rights and privileges being accorded or denied on a group-by-group basis:

...in the history of the Republic, white male property-holders had been enfranchised as a group; blacks had been enslaved, emancipated, and granted citizenship as a group, only to be disenfranchised as a group; Native Americans had been dispossessed and subject to slaughter and “removal” as a group;

Mexicans had been conquered and annexed as a group; Chinese immigrants had been excluded as a group...Japanese immigrants and their children had been interned as a group...

(Jacobson, 2006: 19)

It is Gordon (1964: 135) that pertinently states that “cultural pluralism was a fact in American society before it became a theory,” yet the African American experience had been a world away from the “orchestration of mankind” envisaged by Horace Kallen in the 1920s as blacks had long borne the brunt of an imposed *negative* cultural pluralism. African Americans were linguistically and religiously assimilated but their structural exclusion from the civic and political life of the nation had precluded them from participating in mainstream society and culture. The result was the emergence of a parallel culture that reflected the black experience, and despite exhibiting features of Kallen’s brand of cultural pluralism such as a common lingua franca, the enforced pluralism that African Americans had been subjected to certainly resembled more a nightmare than the pluralist dreams of Horace Kallen.

Thus, one of the fundamental achievements of the civil rights movement, particularly with the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, was to compel the powers that be to acknowledge that American liberalism’s traditional emphasis upon individual rights based upon the conviction that all men are created equal and are endowed with inalienable rights, as underlined within the Declaration of Independence (1776), had long been denied to individuals belonging to specific groups. It was the state that had engendered such a pluralist society by historically imposing impediments to the individual rights of significant sections of its populace. Having long experienced an imposed negative pluralism, the civil rights movement effectively embraced that very pluralism as blacks mobilised as a group and demanded the equal rights and protection of the law guaranteed to them by the Amendments to the Constitution. Consequently, the group-based mobilisation of blacks, their group-based achievements, and the black nationalist ideology not only struck a chord but also provided a pattern of action for other minority groups to similarly campaign for redress.

To all intents and purposes, the movement marked the dawn of a new era of minority-group mobilisation, solidarity, and identity.

#### 4.2 Red Power

The civil rights movement emerged at what was undoubtedly a critical time for America's indigenous population. Since the end of the Second World War, Native American tribes had been decimated by the federal government's policy of "Termination" designed to end historic treaty rights and assimilate Indians into the mainstream. By the 1960s, over a hundred tribes had been terminated and the future of Indian reservation life looked bleak (Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson, 1999). Among the first Native American-based civil rights organisations to emerge was the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) in 1961 which organised a number of "fish-ins" during the mid-1960s, inspired no doubt by the sit-ins by blacks, when state laws in the Pacific Northwest barred Indians from using traditional methods when fishing outside of their reservations. The fish-ins did attract some media attention, particularly following the arrest of the actor Marlon Brando for his participation in one such protest in 1964, but it was not enough to capture the nation's imagination.

This would change dramatically in November 1969 following the occupation of Alcatraz Island by a group calling themselves 'Indians of All Tribes' in an effort to draw attention to the plight of Native American communities (Nagel, 1997). The nineteen-month occupation of the former prison gave birth to the 'Red Power' movement and persuaded the American Indian Movement (AIM), a pan-tribal urban coalition set up in the previous year to combat civil rights abuses, that more provocative protests like that of Alcatraz were required in order to draw nationwide attention to the Indian cause. The first of such demonstrations was staged on Thanksgiving Day in 1970 as AIM members painted Plymouth Rock red and seized the replica of the Mayflower II in protest against the celebration of the Pilgrims' arrival on American shores. The Red Power movement subsequently began to gather momentum and in 1972, on the eve of the presidential election, Native American activists staged the "Trail of Broken Treaties" and descended

upon Washington, D.C. with the intention of presenting to President Nixon a newly-devised 20-point plan redefining U.S.-Indian relations. The protest culminated in the dramatic week-long occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Nagel, 1997).

Nevertheless, the Red Power movement had succeeded in attracting significant public attention via its quasi-militant protests and a number of legislative acts were passed during the 1970s geared toward improving the status of Native Americans. The most important of these was the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act which once and for all brought to an end the federal government's termination plan and ratified the sovereignty of various tribes. Following the peaceful "Longest Walk" march of 1978, the Red Power movement began to grind to a halt following an FBI crackdown similar to that which had brought the Black Power campaign to a close. Red Power was nevertheless considerably successful in accomplishing its aims, and those identifying as American Indian in the 1980 U.S. census had increased by 72 percent (Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson, 1999), indicating that many that had formerly identified as white were now proudly affirming racial minority group-based Native American identities.

#### 4.3 Brown Power

The Chicano/'Brown Power' movement also burst on to the scene in the mid-sixties, adapting many of the tactics of the black movement to their own unique circumstances. Unlike most other groups, Mexican Americans were geographically concentrated in one region of the United States, the Southwest, from where *el movimiento* was launched encompassing a variety of organisations and approaches committed to improving the status of Mexican Americans throughout the region. One of the first leaders of the movement was Reies Lopez Tijerina who founded the Alianza Federal de Mercedes, or Federal Land Grant Alliance, in northern New Mexico in 1963 with the aim of recovering communal land guaranteed to its residents under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Pulida, 2006). However, to highlight their cause Alianza members seized and occupied federal lands leading to a violent confrontation with authorities culminating with Tijerina's imprisonment and the gradual disappearance of both the Alianza and its cause.

In 1965, Rodolfo Gonzalez established the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado which focused on civil rights abuses and discrimination cases akin to the role performed by the NAACP during the early years of the civil rights movement. Two Los Angeles-based youth organisations in the form of the Young Citizens for Communal Action (YCCA) and the United Mexican American Students (UMAS) were founded in 1966 and 1967 respectively. The YCCA, organised by high school students, was initially established to tackle educational issues but the pervasiveness of police brutality toward Mexican Americans in the Los Angeles area radicalised the organisation and it became known as the 'Brown Berets'. Undoubtedly modelled upon the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets stood for the militant arm of the Chicano movement and like their black counterparts wore a military-style uniform and practised a military culture (Pulida, 2006). However, the Berets were neither socialists nor revolutionists and many of their demands were based on the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Chavez, 2002).

The first major mass protest by Mexican Americans took place in East Los Angeles in March 1968 when ten thousand high school students walked out of their classrooms in protest at poor teaching standards and facilities. The primary aim of these "walkouts" or "blowouts" was to highlight "racist teachers and school policies, the lack of freedom of speech, the lack of teachers of Mexican descent, and the absence of classes on Mexican and Mexican American culture and history" (Munoz, Jr., 1989: xi). This was undoubtedly a turning point in the Chicano movement and a year later the representatives of every major youth organisation assembled in Denver, Colorado, and agreed on 'El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán', a call for Chicano self-determination based upon similar principles to those previously advocated by black nationalists—that Anglo-American society was fundamentally racist, that it had continuously victimised and exploited Mexican Americans as a group, and that the only way forward was to shun assimilation in favour of group empowerment. As a result, the Raza Unida Party led by Jose Angel Gutierrez was established in Texas in 1970 with the aim of providing a third party option for Mexican Americans that did not feel their interests were adequately represented by either of the nation's two main political parties. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, however, the

godfather of the Chicano movement was undoubtedly Cesar Chavez, whose United Farm Workers union established to combat the exploitation of migrant labour in California's Central Valley, highlighted by the celebrated grape boycott, had made him into a national figure.

One of the major achievements of *el movimiento* was unquestionably the forging of a distinct Chicano identity based upon the imagery of Mexico and its Indian past. Under the provisions of the 1790 Naturalisation Act and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexican Americans were legally classified as 'white' but nevertheless suffered significant prejudice and discrimination as well as de facto segregation in reality. The Chicano movement rejected both assimilation and this duplicitous white status that had historically been embraced by previous generations and in its place affirmed a new race-based 'brown' identity (Haney-Lopez, 2004).

The movement also came to influence other Spanish-speaking minorities, particularly Puerto Ricans and Cubans. In 1971, Chicano and Puerto Rican organisations in Chicago came together to form the 'Spanish Coalition for Jobs' and mobilised collectively in order to combat employment discrimination (Espiritu, 1992). Puerto Ricans were also galvanised by calls for an independent Puerto Rico, which had been a U.S. commonwealth territory since 1898, but eventually settled down to focus on local politics in New York City. Cuban American activists similarly campaigned for the liberation of Cuba but in due course receded to concentrate on the more practical political issues in South Florida where the vast majority of Cuban refugees had settled.

It was in the 1970s that the term 'Hispanic' came to be officially employed in the United States in an attempt to identify South and Central American immigrants and their descendants. The 1970 U.S. Census was the first to utilise the term as a means by which to quantify the proportion of the nation's population whose origins lie in Spanish-speaking countries. However, Hispanic is neither a racial nor an ethnic category since those identifying as such can be of any racial or ethnic background. Nevertheless, the notion of *Hispanicity* has been felt, as in the case of the aforementioned Chicano and

Puerto Rican organisations, to be a legitimate basis for group mobilisation.

#### 4.4 Yellow Power

Black Power also inspired those of Asian descent to take an introspective look at their own experiences in American society, and perceptions of racial subordination led to the mobilisation of a pan-ethnic 'Yellow Power' movement by the late-sixties. Despite having been collectively categorised within the American system of racial classification, the Southeast Asian-descent community embodied a great deal of ethnic and cultural diversity and had neither a common language like those mobilised by the Brown Power movement nor had been targeted by federal policies aimed at annihilating their communities comparable to those which had instigated the Red Power movement. Aware that they were all perceived as one and the same by society at large, Asian communities had historically often sought to distance themselves from, and were not above denigrating, other Asian groups (Espiritu, 1992). This was a common practice particularly among the Chinese and Japanese communities as Japanese immigrants had often had to pass through the Japanese government's selection process and were thus typically more educated and of higher status than the low-status Chinese labourers that had comprised the majority of nineteenth-century Asian immigration to the United States. Moreover, the onset of the Second World War had prompted those of Chinese descent to actively distinguish themselves from their Japanese counterparts so as not to be confused with the enemy. By the 1960s, then, several factors had to have come together to encourage Asian ethnic groups to put their differences aside and to coalesce under a pan-ethnic Asian banner.

One of the key factors was undoubtedly the diminution of ethnic differences among later-generation American-born Asians who in the post-war period, prior to the 1965 relaxation of immigration controls, had grown to outnumber Asian-born immigrants. These second- and third-generation Asian Americans were linguistically and culturally more assimilated to mainstream values and as a result were no longer consumed by the old animosities that had typically characterised their parents' and grandparents'

generations (Geron, 2003). In addition to this, the post-war baby boom had led to a sizeable number that were of college-age by the late-sixties and, of a total population of 1,369,000 in 1970, 107,366 Asian Americans were enrolled in higher education programmes (Wei, 1993). The Asian American or Yellow Power movement was thus essentially conceived and primarily fuelled by the student activism on college and university campuses.

Two further factors contributed to the formation of this pan-ethnic coalition, both of which to all intents and purposes confirmed that Asian Americans, regardless of national origin, shared both a common experience and a common destiny as 'Asians' in American society. The first was the civil rights movement which had led to a media-hyped projection of Asian Americans as the 'model minority' which set them apart from other non-white groups. This was, according to Geron, a "blatant attempt to sow divisions among America's minority groups" (2003: 168) and was rejected unequivocally by Asian Americans activists that felt that they had been subjected to institutional racism and therefore identified more staunchly with other racially-oppressed non-white minorities.

A second vital factor was undoubtedly the Vietnam War which, for palpable reasons, had a far more profound effect upon the identities of Asian Americans than of any other minority group. The U.S. military's well-known use of the term "gooks" to describe the Asian enemy regardless of whether they were Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian or Laotian, highlighted the lumping together of all Asians and became symbolic of the racial aspect of the war. The indiscriminate killing of Vietnamese peasants was construed as an attack on 'Asianness' itself and the war in its entirety came to be seen as one in which "Asian life as a whole was regarded as "cheap"" (Omi and Winant, 1994: 110). By depicting the war as a racist one, Asian Americans could draw parallels between the government-sanctioned brutality abroad and its racially discriminatory practices at home. Thus, Wei argues, more than any other factor the Vietnam War brought Asian Americans "together psychologically and politically, making them aware of their "Asianness," their membership in a pan-Asian community, and the need for an Asian American Movement" (1993: 2).



The Yellow Power movement which began to mobilise in the summer of 1968 did not, however, bear a great deal of resemblance to the militancy of the Black, Brown, or even Red Power movements, arguably because it was essentially rooted in the Asian middle class. An “Are You Yellow?” conference was held at UCLA for Asian students to discuss Yellow Power and the Vietnam War, and Asian American student activists participated in the ‘Third World’ strike at San Francisco State University which led to the founding of its College of Ethnic Studies (Espiritu, 1992). Further up the western seaboard, the Asian Coalition for Equality (ACE) was established in Seattle in 1969, as well as the Asian American Student Coalition (ASC) at the University of Washington. The demands of the movement were for the most part straightforward: an end to racist hiring practices, biased school curricula, demeaning media stereotypes, residential discrimination, and the gentrification of historic Asian enclaves which were increasingly threatened by urban redevelopment schemes.

Demands aside, the Yellow Power movement was primarily responsible for creating and consolidating a new pan-ethnic ‘Asian American’ identity. This involved a fundamental rejection of the label ‘Oriental’ given its colonial connotations as well as widespread agreement that it was essentially a derogatory racial ascription analogous to ‘Negro’. An ‘Asian American’ identity, on the other hand, was not only more geographically accurate but also incorporated pre-existing ‘American’ identities that reflected a shared U.S. experience (Pulido, 2006). This new form of identification effectively embraced the pan-ethnic/racial label that had originally been imposed upon those of Asian descent and which had historically lumped them all together, and emerged as a symbol of pride and a rallying point for mobilisation against institutionalised policies and practices that had isolated Asians and precluded them from comprehensive participation in the mainstream. The Yellow Power movement and the affirmation of Asian American identities ultimately signified the rejection of unquestioning assimilation in favour of more cultural pluralist propensities.

#### 4.5 White (Ethnic) Power

In view of the historic treatment of non-whites in America, as outlined in Chapter 2, few would dare to argue that the Black, Red, Brown, and Yellow Movements were without cause. Yet despite the fact that discrimination against those whose ancestors had arrived in the United States at the turn of the century was not in any way institutionalised as it was for non-white groups, by the 1960s and 1970s later-generation Americans of southern and eastern European descent similarly began to band together on the basis of common origins. “Ethnic traces and trappings that had been lost, forgotten, or forcibly cast off by prior generations in their rush to Americanize,” Jacobson avows, “were now rediscovered and embraced by a younger generation who had known nothing but “American” culture” (2006: 3). Yet the emergent white ethnic movement involved far more than just a passing interest in ethnic trappings and, like other non-white minority groups, was undoubtedly elicited by the African American precedent:

Eventually ethnic fever reached the “white ethnics”—Jews, Irish, Italians, Poles, and others of European ancestry....the pendulum seemed to be swinging back, as these groups repudiated their assimilationist tendencies. Through art, literature, and politics, they sought to promote ethnic pride and solidarity, and to affirm their right to a separate identity within the framework of a pluralist nation.

(Steinberg, 1989: 3)

One key area within which white ethnic themes emerged was the arts and culture industries. New magazines catering to distinctly ethnic readerships began to emerge and the theatre, film, and television industries began to release well-financed and well-publicised productions and programmes during the 1960s and 1970s purposely centred upon questions of white ethnic experiences and identities. In 1964, *Zorba the Greek*, a film shot on location on the Greek island of Crete, received critical acclaim and won three Academy Awards. Its popularity led to a Broadway adaptation in 1968 which told the story of a young Greek-American that had inherited an abandoned mine on the island. The exotic backdrops in the film and the Greek-American connection in the musical *Zorba* undoubtedly contributed to a sense of pride among Americans of Greek descent

and both reflected and projected aspects of a Greek-American identity.

Jewish themes also received significant exposure. The original Broadway production in 1964 of Joseph Stein's *Fiddler on the Roof*, which painted a picture of the precariousness of Jewish life in Tsarist Russia in the early twentieth century, won nine Tony Awards and the 1971 screen adaptation went on to receive three Academy Awards including that of Best Picture. Barbra Streisand, now one of the most celebrated Jewish American artistes, shot to fame in 1964 following the musical *Funny Girl*, a tale based loosely on the life of Fania Borach, a New York-born entertainer of Hungarian-Jewish descent, in the first half of the twentieth century. Streisand reprised her role in a 1968 screen adaptation which became the biggest grossing film of the year and gained her the Academy Award for Best Actress. In 1975, *Hester Street*, a film based on Abraham Cahan's *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1896), engaged directly with issues concerning Jewish identity and assimilation among turn-of-the-century Jewish immigrants in New York City's Lower East Side and featured substantial dialogue in Yiddish.

Italian-American themes began to emerge by the late-1960s, particularly following the publication of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* which spent forty weeks on the Times Best Seller list in 1969 (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970). Francis Ford Coppola's screen adaptations of the tale of the New York-based Mafia crime family in the form of *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather Part II* (1974) won a total of nine Academy Awards and propelled two of its principals, Al Pacino and Robert De Niro, both of Italian descent, into stardom. The romanticised tale of the Corleone family was immensely popular despite, or perhaps due to, its recurring criminal and violent themes and both the original and its sequel are widely regarded as being two of the best of all time. According to Novak:

Movies like *The Godfather* fascinate huge audiences not solely by their violence.... They fascinate because of the "glimpse behind the curtains": a look into what it is like to live a different way of life, to perceive oneself and the world in a different way—complete even to a distinctive system of honour and justice, a "brotherhood" *within* a large and diverse ethnic tradition. The movie revealed aspects of American

life never before glimpsed by the public—and it revealed, incidentally, some of the ways in which Anglo-American systems of justice and power excluded other ethnic groups and led some of their members to fall back on their own resources. It revealed a thick and dense family life, so different from the Anglo-Saxon cult of the individual. It revealed concepts of loyalty, honour, direct violence, and obedience not Anglo-Saxon.

(1996: xxxviii, original italics)

Based on the above passage, it is apparent that Novak, and undoubtedly many others, seemingly overlooked the fact that *The Godfather* was entirely fictitious, yet it did draw significant attention to perceptions of Italian-Americanness. Italian-American characters were also portrayed in such films as Sylvester Stallone's tale of the 'Italian Stallion' in *Rocky* (1976) and *Rocky II* (1979), John Travolta's Oscar-nominated performance as Tony Manero in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), and the biographical account of the life of Italian-American boxer Jake LaMotta in Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980) for which Robert De Niro collected an Academy Award for Best Actor.

The small screen also made significant contributions to the projection of white ethnic themes in the popular media. Television serials such as *Columbo* (1971-1978), *Kojak* (1973-1978) and *Petrocelli* (1974-1976) drew much attention to the Italian and Greek backgrounds of its title characters, and scores of white ethnic characters appeared in seminal roles in a variety of other television productions. However, it was arguably the miniseries *Roots* (1977), adapted from Arthur Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976), that did more for white ethnic identities than any white ethnic character in any other television production. Despite being a tale based on slavery and the black experience, *Roots* was "appropriated as a generic saga of immigration and assimilation" (Jacobson, 2006: 44) and lapped up by white audiences:

The print and televised versions of *Roots* gave the history of slavery the broadest public airing it had ever received in American culture, and yet Haley's narrative was quickly appropriated as a template for considering *anyone's* familial origins and *any* distant village. In the wake of the broadcast in January 1977 (seen by an

estimated 80 million viewers, according to Nielson) hundreds of thousands of white Americans descended on local libraries and archives in search of information, not about slavery or black history, but about themselves and their own ethnic past.

(Jacobson, 2006: 42-3, original italics)

The 1960s and 1970s thus witnessed an explosion in white ethnic themes in the popular media in stark contrast to decades past. This upsurge was in part a reflection of ethnic sentiments among key figures within certain culture industries, yet it also triggered the creation of a market for white ethnicities via the fashionable exposure of white ethnic themes and characters. Taken together, new ethnic publications and productions on Broadway and on the silver and small screens reflected a general climate in which even the tale of an African slave could instigate a search for white ethnic roots.

New ethnic organizations and institutions also came into being during the 1960s and 1970s. Italian Americans in New York City founded the American Italian Anti-Defamation League which, following legal action from the Jewish-based Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, changed its name to the Council of Italian-American Organisations with the fitting acronym CIAO (Morsell, 1973). The principal objective of the organisation was to combat the stereotyping of Italian Americans as gangsters and criminals as in *The Godfather* and to highlight the contributions made by Italian Americans to American life. Second- and third-generation Greek Americans also flocked to join the Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA) as a means by which to facilitate their growing sense of Greek consciousness. Polish Americans also established a number of cultural and fraternal organisations in order to combat the stereotyping of Poles in the media as well as to oppose Polish jokes that typically depicted Poles as having more brawn than brain. The Polish American Arts Association was founded in 1966 and in the 1960s General Pulaski Memorial Day, a holiday in honour of the Polish hero of the American Revolution, drew unprecedented numbers of later-generation Polish-Americans. In 1973, the National Polish-American Hall of Fame was founded to honour sporting stars of Polish descent, and a U.S. Census Bureau survey conducted in the early 1970s found that over one million identified themselves as Polish than had done so just a

few years earlier in the U.S. Census of 1970 (Jacobson, 2006). In addition to such ethnic-themed organisations, local museums dedicated to specific white ethnic heritages in America were founded across the nation. Interest in these new ethnic organisations were seldom fuelled by those of the immigrant generation for whom ethnic organisations had been established soon after arrival in the United States in the form of mutual aid and benefit societies. The ethnic organisations of the 1960s and 1970s were established in response to the events of the time by later-generation white ethnics in search of a means by which to channel newfound pride in their ethnic heritages. Long gone was the need for organisations aimed at providing mutual aid and a sense of security for those that had arrived from a foreign land. The new organisations were primarily bent on repudiating offensive stereotypes in the mass media as well as generating and promoting a sense of pride in ethnic origins and essentially functioned as hubs for those that wished to learn more about their ancestral heritage and culture.

#### 4.5.1 White Ethnic Disassociation

A key instigator of this sudden ‘revival’ of ethnicity at the hands of white ethnics was undoubtedly the overwhelming successes of the civil rights movement both symbolically, by establishing a central place in the national psyche, as well as legislatively, since the new laws that were passed to all intents and purposes signified an acknowledgment on the part of the U.S. establishment that blacks had been unfairly and unequally treated in American society to the extent that new legislation, and not just goodwill, was required in order to redress the balance. However, widespread acknowledgment that blacks were, and had historically been, victims of deep-seated prejudice and discrimination raised the immediate question of who the perpetrators were of this centuries-long injustice. The answer to this question was both simple and straightforward: whites. For this reason, the centrality of black grievance during the 1960s effectively made whiteness a liability since whites were being held collectively responsible for both the past and present racial oppression of blacks and other nonwhites.

The result was the rapid distancing by many white ethnics from the racial category to

which they had, until then, favourably belonged. In its place ethnicity, which had long been considered an obstacle to upward mobility and mainstream acceptance, now embodied a haven from which white ethnics could safely absolve themselves of any culpability regarding the treatment of nonwhites in American society. Novak epitomises this white ethnic distancing from monolithic white privilege as he recounts that:

One day on a platform, an American Indian was telling a group of Polish nuns and me what our ancestors did to *his* ancestors. I tried gently to remind him that my grandparents (and theirs) never *saw* an Indian. They came to this country after that. Nor were they responsible for enslaving the blacks (or anyone else). They themselves escaped serfdom barely four generations ago—almost as recently as blacks escaped slavery.

(1996: xliv: original italics)

Novak's defence is, of course, lamentably unenlightened and Jacobson is wholly justified in stating that Novak's disavowal "fossilizes racial injustice in dim national antiquity, and so glosses over more recent discriminatory practices in housing, hiring, and unionization, for instance, which *did* benefit these "newcomers," fresh off the boat as they were" (2006: 22, original italics). The fact remains that white ethnics, despite having faced considerable levels of societal prejudice and discrimination upon arrival in the United States, were nonetheless permitted to enter as 'free whites' and were neither terminated, enslaved, annexed or interned, nor suffered from legally sanctioned obstacles to upward mobility or denied the right to naturalise as had long been the case for non-white groups. It was their relative whiteness vis-à-vis nonwhites that had guaranteed their status as members of the ruling race in American society and which had encouraged the powers that be to employ Americanization programmes in order to fully incorporate them into the mainstream. To many white ethnics of the immigrant generation, the discernible costs attached to being categorised as anything but white would have positively encouraged them to avoid such a scenario at any cost.

But the tables had now turned and what had once constituted an amenable marker of privilege to many white ethnics had now become uncomfortable and, even worse,

instantly recognisable. “Whiteness had been a gift to European immigrants,” Gitlin claims, “but it was a cheque that the second and third generations were reluctant to cash—it reeked of racism” (1995: 136-7). Ethnicity, as Novak has aptly demonstrated above, thus provided white ethnics with a get-out clause that could effectively be unearthed and utilised in order to deny culpability with respect to American society’s race-based imbalance of power.

The key to distancing oneself from white privilege was to identify, and to identify with, a recent immigrant forebear—the more recent the better—that had faced some degree of prejudice and discrimination at the hands of WASP society. This was relatively straightforward for many white ethnics that were embracing their ethnic heritages at this time since those involved were predominantly later-generation white ethnics whose family lines had arrived in the United States in the 1880-1920 period. This timing was crucial since the arrival of sizeable white ethnic immigrant groups during the two great waves instigated considerable nativist hostility which consequently triggered the ensuing Americanization campaigns. Victimization could also be argued on the grounds of religion since the majority of white ethnic immigrants were of the Catholic and Jewish faiths and had no doubt encountered the disdain of their predominantly Protestant hosts.

Another reason why this timing was crucial relates to the positioning of white ethnic immigrants within America’s history of race-based transgressions. By identifying, and identifying with, immigrant forebears that had arrived in the period 1880-1920, white ethnics could point out that their forebears had naught to do with slavery since they had arrived after the Civil War and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution; after the Indian Wars and the confinement of Native Americans to reservations; after the Mexican-American War following which the United States ‘purchased’ over half of Mexico’s territory; and, for the most part, after Chinese immigrants had been barred altogether on racial grounds from entering the U.S. Thus, by ‘rediscovering’ ethnic identities, embodied in such declarations as “I’m not white; I’m Italian,” white ethnics could not only safely claim on the basis of chronology that they and their immigrant forebears had nothing to do with the nation’s odious crimes against



non-white minorities, but could equally also portray their forebears as innocent bystanders whose descendants were now mistakenly being blamed for the prejudice and discrimination that their own grandparents and great-grandparents had also endured.

What was evidently lost on white ethnics such as Novak was the fact that one need not be a party to a crime in order to enjoy the spoils. The immigrant forebears of the vast majority of southern and eastern European ethnics had not even arrived in the United States when the worst atrocities were taking place, but they undoubtedly benefited from the legacy of slavery and the institutional and societal arrangements that followed which relegated nonwhites to a far inferior position to theirs. This would not, of course, have occurred to those white ethnics rushing to embrace and assert ethnic identities in order to claim an outsider status. The objective was simply to not be white.

#### 4.5.2 Resentment and Racism

Another key, and highly controversial, factor that cannot be overlooked in relation to the prompt turn or 'return' to national-origin identities by many white ethnics is resentment toward blacks in light of their seemingly rapid overnight advancement and the significant inroads that were being made into previously all-white employment sectors and residential districts. It was President Kennedy that had provided the framework for this in 1961 via Executive Order 10925 that prohibited discrimination and promoted equal opportunity within the selection process for federal government jobs, but it was his successor's vision of a 'Great Society' that had extended his proposals even further. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, further bolstered by President Johnson's signing of Executive Order 11246 in 1965, prohibited all forms of employment discrimination and inaugurated affirmative action policies by way of the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission aimed at recruiting and promoting minority candidates within a multitude of governmental and non-governmental institutions. In addition, Johnson's signature on the 1968 Civil Rights Act, or Fair Housing Act, prohibited discrimination in the property sector. To some white ethnics at least, then, a black onslaught was emerging from two separate directions with the potential to affect two of the most fundamental

areas of life: work and home.

The foremost grievance against affirmative action policies was the belief that under-qualified, and thus undeserving, African American job applicants were being favoured over whites under the aegis of the authorities in an attempt to bolster racial minority representation. Thus, to many white ethnics, particularly those in the lower socio-economic strata for whom upward mobility was and/or had been a slow and painstaking process, African American gains as a result of the civil rights movement were perceived as being grossly unfair. According to Novak:

The ethnics believe that they chose one route to moderate success in America; namely, loyalty, hard work, family discipline, and gradual self-development. They tend to believe that some blacks, admittedly more deeply injured and penalised in America, want to jump, *via* revolutionary militance, from a largely rural base of skills and habits over the heads of lower-class whites.

(1996: 35, original italics)

Similarly, Glazer and Moynihan highlight that in New York City “Doors were opened to blacks everywhere in the city, which would never have been opened to a Pole or a Slovak with similar credentials” (1970: lxxv). Thus, lower-class white ethnics that perceived there to be glass ceilings in place, as well as those in the middle classes that had encountered discrimination during the course of upward mobility, felt aggrieved by the fact that what had taken them two or three generations to achieve by keeping their heads down and working hard was now being demanded, and seemingly in many cases granted, solely on the basis of skin colour. It was felt, then, that the achievements of those that had borne the bigotry and swallowed the insults and yet had diligently stuck to the straight and narrow path to success were now being undermined by those utilising violence and the legacy of slavery to strong-arm the authorities and leapfrog over those of similar means and better qualifications who happened to be white.

Two cases in point—one fictional and symbolic, the other factual and revealing—can be cited as illustrations of this white resentment toward what were held to be unfair policies

that victimised whites, and both have been pertinently identified by Jacobson (2006). A factual manifestation of white resentment can be found in the case of *The Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), a United States Supreme Court ruling whose story had begun two years prior when Allan Bakke began legal proceedings against the University of California Davis (UC Davis) for having twice denied him admission to their medical school. Sixteen places out of the one hundred available at the school had been reserved for minority candidates that had to compete amongst themselves for admission but not against the regular pool of applicants, and it was Bakke's unwavering belief that affirmative action policies were solely responsible for his twice-failed application that led to him suing the university on the grounds of discrimination at the California Supreme Court in 1976. In a somewhat ironic twist of fate, Bakke argued that the affirmative action policies that guided the admissions process at UC Davis violated the 'equal protection' clause of the Fourteenth Amendment—the very same clause utilised in the *Brown* case of 1954 that had brought de jure racial segregation to an end. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of Bakke in 1976 on constitutional grounds citing it as a case of reverse discrimination, and when UC Davis took the case to the United States Supreme Court in 1978 the Court ruled once again in Bakke's favour and he was duly granted admission. The Bakke case admittedly underlines a more general white resentment toward affirmative action rather than a specifically white ethnic one since no mention is made of the plaintiff's ethnic background. Nevertheless, the case embodies the sentiments that many whites, including white ethnics, undoubtedly had toward the prospect of black advancement at their expense.

A fictional and far more subtle illustration of resentment, and one that arguably pertains more directly to white ethnics, can be said to have appeared in the form of Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* (1976) and *Rocky II* (1979). Released just a few weeks after the 1976 state-level ruling in Bakke's favour, *Rocky* appears on the face of it to be a standard underdog film. However, only upon consideration of the context and upon delving below the surface of both films's accounts of the humble and heavily disadvantaged underdog that is thrust into the limelight and successfully holds his own does the deeper import of both the characters and the narrative reveal itself. In fact, the ethnic background of the

title character, Rocky Balboa, could not have been made more apparent than via his boxing nickname—‘The Italian Stallion’. Similarly, his opponent Apollo Creed, the arrogant, quick-witted, loudmouthed African American heavyweight champion of the world, undoubtedly modelled upon Muhammad Ali, had the added force of a surname with a definite racial overtone. Creed selects Balboa out of a list of potential opponents for a ‘Bicentennial Super Battle’ to be staged on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1976 claiming that, since it had been an Italian that had discovered America, the media would relish the prospect of one of Columbus’ descendants taking on the world heavyweight champion for a shot at the title in the nation’s bicentennial year.

Any comparison between the two boxers in *Rocky* only serves to underline what polar opposites they are: one is black, the other white; one a sporting celebrity, the other a complete unknown; one is arrogant and quick-witted, the other humble and slow on the uptake; one is wealthy and in his prime, the other works ineffectively as a leg-breaker for a loan shark, struggles to make ends meet, and is a drinking, smoking, egg-and-hammer. The final showdown features a cameo by Joe Frazier—another well to do African American—and by the end of the fight the viewer is led to believe that the underdog certainly matched the champion. However, a split decision is delivered in Creed’s favour and, according to Jacobson, “the jarring abruptness of the freeze-frame and the suddenly rolling credits, generate a kind of dismay in the viewer that is more powerful than anything the script could have delivered with words” (2006: 104).

The 1979 sequel further underlines the economic disparities between Balboa and Creed and also draws further attention to ethno-racial distinctions. It is revealed that Balboa had left school with only a ninth-grade education, with no high school diploma or qualifications, and can barely read. Whilst seeking work he is told that he should be content with “a good-paying, menial labour job” following which he gets a job hauling beef where he is hired, and later laid off, by a black superior. Once a rematch is eventually agreed for Thanksgiving Day 1976, Creed is shown training in his palatial gym whilst Balboa chases chickens, runs on the streets and along rail-tracks, beats metal at a scrap-yard and performs pull-ups on a climbing frame at a children’s park.

After having agreed at the end of the first fight that there would not be a rematch, it is Creed that had taunted Balboa back into the ring. Having convinced few that he had truly bettered his opponent the first time around, Creed receives hate-mail from blacks accusing him of fixing the fight with such words as “you are a disgrace to your people.” The Italian background of the title character also receives far greater attention in the sequel than in the original as Balboa’s wedding ceremony is conducted in Italian and in the run-up to the rematch his trainer eggs him on with “Get that olive oil out of you!” At the fight itself, a ringside commentator observes that “This area’s certainly packed with Rocky’s people; I’ve never seen so many Italians in one place in my life,” and after the first round of the fight Balboa’s trainer’s words of encouragement include “You’re a greasy, fast, two-hundred-pound Italian tank!” Unlike in the original, however, this time Balboa is victorious, but only just.

The ethno-racial nuances throughout both films are not necessarily obvious and may not even be intentional, but they are most certainly there. The first is undoubtedly the respective socio-economic statuses of the two boxers which put forth the notion that not all blacks are poor and disadvantaged and not all whites are privileged members of the ruling race. Furthermore, the split decision in favour of Creed and the perceived injustice that it entailed can be interpreted to imply that in an equal contest the powers that be favour the (racial) minority candidate. Creed’s taunting arrogance and sharpness is also portrayed in stark contrast to Balboa’s almost childlike innocence, suggesting that he is by and large a victim of issues that are well beyond his comprehension. Within this context, then, it is certainly feasible to argue that the mass appeal of the *Rocky* franchise may have been down to more than just cinematography. Admittedly, the sequel did not receive anywhere near the critical acclaim of the original which received ten Academy Award nominations leading to three wins. Yet on some or on many levels the *Rocky* saga also struck a chord, the evidence of which can still be found outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where one of the most iconic scenes was filmed, in the form of a statue of this fictional character.

Within a general climate of white resentment, then, white ethnics undoubtedly had an

advantage. This is in view of the fact that the wordings of both the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 were not based solely upon the language of race but also prohibited discrimination on the grounds of national origin and religion. The Acts thus provided the legal framework within which white ethnic identifications, which were opportunely available to southern and eastern European ethnics given their relative proximity to the point of immigration, could legitimately function as focal points from which to resist the ameliorative policies that advanced blacks and other non-whites into spheres previously dominated by white ethnics. In view of this, however, the rapid embracing of white ethnic identities does raise a vital question, as Glazer and Moynihan highlight:

Is the reaction of whites, of ethnic groups and the working and middle class, to the increasingly militant demands of Negroes a matter of defence of ethnic and occupational turfs and privileges or is it a matter of racial antipathy, and more of racism, that large and ill-used term, which means, if it means anything, that those afflicted with it see the world primarily in racial categories, in black and white, and insist that black should be down and white up?

(1970: xxxvii-xxxviii)

The issue of whether a racist element was involved in some way with the rapid taking up of white ethnic identities is admittedly a controversial one, yet it does pose a challenging question: were the concerted efforts of white ethnics to unite on the basis of ethnic origins in actual fact a natural, and more importantly colour-blind, response to threats to class interests, or were they motivated by a more sinister belief that blacks should be prevented by all possible means from achieving socio-economic parity with them? Glazer and Moynihan make it abundantly clear that they categorically disagree with the charge that white ethnicities were exhumed out of racism and argue that “ethnicity is a real and felt basis of political and social action” (1970: xxxviii). They further add that:

...it is not true that every white opposing policies and demands that are aimed at raising the number of Negroes in good jobs and high-paying jobs is simply acting out of racism. He may be acting out of a sense of fair shares, the proper reward for merit, and right relation between effort and income. In this case, to attack his

resistance on the grounds that he is being racist and selfish is politically totally ineffective and self-defeating; to understand that this resistance is based on a sense of what is right and proper, a sense that we would not want to destroy, is to come closer to finding approaches to moderating white resistance to policies that will improve the economic position of Negroes.

(1970: lvi-lvii)

Glazer's and Moynihan's view is revealing in two important ways. First is their argument that not every white person that opposes affirmative action is necessarily racist. Such a statement does not altogether eliminate racism as a factor but merely argues that it *may* not have been the chief motivating factor for *all* whites. Secondly, and more importantly, they add a quasi-moralistic dimension to their defence of supposedly non-racist whites by the use of such terms as "sense of fair shares," "proper reward for merit," and "sense of what is right and proper." One could interpret their view as one that condones white resistance on the basis of some universal sense of right and wrong, of fairness and unfairness, and that to simply comply with affirmative action policies and black demands would be to thwart this universality. In this sense, then, according to Glazer and Moynihan, not only are white ethnics not racist but their resistance to black advancement constitutes something of a moral crusade against unfairness and injustice.

However, it is Novak that, unsurprisingly, presents the most stringent defence of white ethnics against allegations of racism and in doing so argues from a number of different angles. The first is that of relieving blacks of the responsibility for the ways in which their advancement impinged upon white ethnic life:

There are, at present, no social rewards for integration, only penalties. When blacks begin to move into an area, city services should be upgraded; garbage should be collected one extra time, schools should be improved, streets should be more carefully repaired. Instead, everything begins to decline.

(1996: 15)

This line of argument is resourceful to say the least, since it acknowledges that white ethnics suffered as a result of black gains but shifts the blame away from blacks themselves and on to the shoulders of the (WASP) authorities. From this angle, then, white ethnics are neither racist nor do they begrudge black gains, and merely feel that they should not be disadvantaged by black advancement and that it is the responsibility of the powers that be to make integration less injurious.

Novak's second strategy is to entirely divorce white ethnics from whiteness. He pleads with black leaders "not to be too Protestant with ethnic Catholics" (1996: 302) and to not confuse them with WASPs. He also recycles the argument used to contradict the Native Americans that accused his ancestors of decimating their people, and argues that white ethnicities are entirely unconnected to issues relating to race and racism:

Racism does not need ethnicity in order to be legitimated in America. It was quite well legitimated by Anglo-American culture, well before white ethnics arrived here in significant numbers, well before many white ethnics had ever met blacks.

(1996: 353)

According to this line of reasoning, white ethnicities are entirely distinct and unconnected to America's historic black/white dichotomy, and since white ethnics are not WASPs, i.e. the architects of slavery and institutionalised racism, they are therefore not themselves racist toward blacks.

A third argument employed by Novak is linked to the previous one but also takes it one step further:

In America, racism did not wait until the immigrants of 1880 and after began to arrive. Indeed, it is precisely those parts of the country solely populated by British Americans that the conditions of blacks have been legally and institutionally least humane. In those parts of the country most heavily populated by white ethnics, the cultural symbol and the political muscle that have led to the civil-rights and other



legislation have received wide support.

(1996: 255-56)

This can, of all of Novak's claims, be regarded as the 'not-racist-by-default' argument. It is, of course, a fact that the majority of white ethnic immigrants settled in the industrial cities of the northeast, and it is similarly a fact that white support for the civil rights movement was more forthcoming in the North than in the southern states that were home to the majority of America's black population and where the legacy of slavery was most potent. By equating the region from which white support for civil rights was most prevalent with that of the areas with higher concentrations of white ethnics, Novak logically deduces that white ethnics, by default, simply cannot be racist. This is at best a dubious argument, and at worse a feeble attempt to clutch at straws.

The certainty with which Novak and, to a lesser extent, Glazer and Moynihan seek to play down the racist argument could be more a case of wishful thinking than factual representation. Professor Mark Naison of Fordham University proffers his own personal narrative and maintains that in the Italian and Jewish neighbourhoods of New York City "fear and hatred of Blacks was a communal obsession in the late 60's and early 70's," and that "conversations about how blacks were ruining the country could be heard almost everywhere" (Naison, 2006). He further adds that:

Some of this anger was rooted in resentments over welfare and affirmative action, and a perception that blacks were demanding special favours to support their efforts to pull themselves out of poverty. But some of it, much more than Conservatives are now willing to admit, was rooted in a raw, visceral hatred and resentment of Black people that was the currency of daily conversation in homes, bars, and places of recreation and which periodically burst to the surface in events like the Boston and Canarsie Busing Riots, the vandalizing of homes purchased by Black families in white neighbourhoods, and the ostracism and occasionally physical expulsion of whites in these communities who dared to date or marry Blacks.

(Naison, 2006)

Should Naison's account be accepted as a true reflection of the times then it is clear that white resentment toward what were considered unfair policies was only the tip of the iceberg and that attitudes toward blacks ran far deeper than Glazer's and Moynihan's "sense of fair shares" approach. Equally, Novak's attempt to deny white ethnic participation within the broader realms of white racism also finds itself on thin ice. Indeed, one could argue that the fundamental flaw is found in attempts to separate resentment from racism. From this perspective, a colour-blind resentment based on the protection of class interests is both understandable and justifiable, whereas racism is not. Yet racism itself is far more multifaceted than the simplistic 'black down, white up' paradigm that Glazer and Moynihan present. They, nor Novak, attend to the prospect that white resentment can constitute both an expression of racism as well as a *source* of racism. Indeed, should resentment toward a specific racial group, regardless of basis, not constitute good enough grounds for racism then one has to wonder what does. By embracing ethnic identities and mobilising upon the basis of national origins, white ethnics were in a far better position to resist, and also far more justifiable in resenting, policies aimed at advancing blacks since it was no longer a question of white against black but of one minority against another. Competition for resources among minority ethnic groups was undoubtedly far more acceptable than a race-based white opposition to policies aimed at improving the condition of blacks. White ethnicities were thus, should the intent have existed, more than capable of cloaking deep-seated racist attitudes toward blacks in light of their socio-economic advancement.

#### 4.5.3 Widespread Disenchantment

This chapter has so far alluded to the white ethnic upsurge as having been a direct response to African American socio-economic advancement following the successes of the civil rights movement. However, despite the centrality of this factor, it would be both insufficient and misleading to argue that this was the sole catalyst. Fishman (1985) pertinently articulates this point as he states that:

The rising tide of Black pride should not be ignored as a stimulant for the White

ethnic revival, but neither should it be overstressed. The two circles overlap only in part, having their own dynamics and their own course, intensity, focus, and time frame...

(1985: 508)

The civil rights movement undoubtedly played a key role in the embracing of white ethnic identities, but there was certainly a lot more going on during this period. Arguably the most important of these ancillary events was the war in Vietnam. Left-wing opponents of the war found a meaningful collaborator in the form of a growing youth movement as President Johnson's dramatic escalation of the war via the bombing of North Vietnam in 1965 made the draft a distinct possibility, particularly in light of the growing number of American servicemen returning home in body bags. By this time, the youth movement was already well-organised and, spearheaded by organisations such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) which had played an active role in the 1963 March on Washington, vehemently campaigned against the war and on numerous other socio-political issues. Take the civil rights movement which had highlighted the historic and prejudicial treatment of blacks and to it add antipathy toward the government's handling of the war in Vietnam, the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973 following criminal charges for tax evasion and money laundering, and the Watergate scandal culminating with President Nixon's resignation in 1974, and one finds sufficient cause for widespread disenchantment and the overall discrediting of the establishment.

In light of these events, anti-central expressions were on the rise and prevailing perceptions of the American Dream as well as of the image of the United States as a melting pot of nationalities began to disintegrate and transform. Glazer and Moynihan had drawn academic interest, via the publication of *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963), to their view that "The experience of Zangwill's hero and heroine was *not* general. The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen" (1970: 290, original italics), and according to Harold Isaacs the events of the period had made it...

...fashionable to say that ethnic differences among Americans did not melt at all in that melting pot. Indeed, as some of them now seem to see it, the pot itself was

used by the wicked Wasps of the Old Northeast to boil away all the rich pure stuff of non-Waspness and cook up a great thin mess of pasty second-class Waspness, which then became the essence of the common American culture. It all took place in the American dream/nightmare from which some of these rediscoverers of ethnicity see themselves as happily waking at last, looking with newly rubbed and cleared eyes on their own non-Wasp heritage.

(1975: 210-11)

Thus, although the civil rights movement had bolstered the attractiveness of white ethnic identities as a means by which to disassociate from white privilege, there were further reasons for why those embracing such identities may have wanted to distance themselves from, as Isaacs dubs, Waspness. Being a WASP, in more ways than one, had become distinctly unappealing:

For years, WASPs could comfortably comment on the distant progress of others in “Americanizing” themselves, that is to say, in making themselves into WASPs. Nowadays, the glamour is gone. Who wants to be a WASP? Not even WASPs are certain.

(Novak, 1996: 135)

The result was the questioning of all pre-existing attitudes and approaches, and the melting pot was among the first. The assault on the melting pot symbol was not, however, entirely new. Randolph Bourne had been vehemently critical of it several decades earlier following the outbreak of ethnic sentiment with the onset of the First World War, and had denounced WASPs for reproaching white ethnics “for not being melted in a pot which never existed” (1916: 97). By the 1960s and 1970s, the melting pot had increasingly come to be regarded as a symbol that had been concocted and imposed upon white ethnics by a predominantly Anglo-American elite, and one Italian-American caucus went as far as to argue that the melting pot was a “myth which has been perpetuated by the elite-dominated American educational system to commit cultural genocide on our people” (cited in Mann, 1979: 36). With the overall discrediting of the American mainstream, then, white ethnicities emerged as more secure and more alluring building

blocks upon which to focus and identify.

The immediate events of the time were not, however, the only source of disenchantment. The post-war period had witnessed a gradual rise in feelings of atomisation as a result of, in Jacobson's words, "the bloodless, homogenising forces of mass production and consumption, mass media, commodification, bureaucratization, and suburbanization" (2006: 23). The roots of these forces had been highlighted by Horace Kallen as far back as 1915 when he stated that:

In these days of ready-made garments, factory-made furniture, refrigerating plants, "boiler-plate," movies and radio, it is almost impossible that the mass of inhabitants of the United States should wear other than uniform clothes, use other than uniform furniture, utensils or eat anything but the same sorts of food, read anything but the same syndicated hokum, see anything but the same standardized romances and hear anything but the same broadcasted barbarisms. In these days of rapid transit and industrial mobility it must seem impossible that any stratification of population should be permanent. Hardly anybody seems to have been born where he lives, or to live where he has been born. The teetering of demand and supply in industry and commerce keep large masses of population constantly mobile: so that many people no longer can be said to have homes.

(1998 [1915]: 76-77)

The 1960s and 1970s thus encompassed the zenith of a rising tide of disillusionment that had been gradually building up over several decades, and for many whites in search of a more personal and meaningful identity following the collapse of the mainstream undoubtedly found falling back on their ethnic ancestries to be the answer.

However, within this context, the emergence of white ethnic identities can also be argued to have been an inevitable outcome of modernization. Alexis de Tocqueville had predicted as far back as the 1830s that "far from supposing that the members of modern society will ultimately live in common, I am afraid they will end up by forming only

small coteries” ([1835] 1998: 301). In a similar vein, Buenker and Ratner argue that:

Given a society so open and fluid and a people so geographically mobile, Americans seek to identify themselves by membership in a variety of organisations and groups. Hence, we might suppose that the third generation’s search for ethnic identity occurs for the same reason that most Americans identify with a church, a political party, a civic club, or other mediating institution. If that is true, then the search for ethnic identity is primarily a manifestation of the universal desire for social and personal location in modern mass society.

(1992: 4)

Hence, in this respect, for many whites ethnicity could simply have been one of a multitude of clubs that they had the option of turning to for “social and personal location” amidst the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s.

#### 4.5.4 Other Movements

The various ethnic movements that followed in the footsteps of the Civil Rights movement were not alone in demanding equal rights and treatment, as myriad other groups that felt hard done-by and/or mistreated in American society also began to revolt. Arguably the most important of these was that concerning women’s rights and the social upheavals of the 1960s provided fertile ground for the birth of second-wave feminism:

The drive for equal rights for women, originating late in the nineteenth century, became an effective social movement in the 1960s. Male chauvinism was the immediate target of attack; the social system that relegated women to an inferior position was the main focus of the movement. Women organised effectively to change hiring practices and salary scales. They vociferously challenged the role of mother and housewife assigned to them and fought successfully for the right to be viewed in terms of individual merit and not of gender.

(Papajohn, 1999: 117)

The Women's Liberation movement, in addition to demanding socio-economic parity with male counterparts, was also inexorably part of a more general sexual revolution which campaigned for reproductive rights such as access to contraception and to abortions. In the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), the Supreme Court ruled that a Connecticut law prohibiting the use of contraception was unconstitutional vis-à-vis the right to privacy and legalised its use by married couples. This landmark ruling was followed by *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972) that extended the right to contraception to the unmarried, and *Roe v. Wade* (1973) which legalised abortions on a federal level. The movement for sexual liberation is, however, in all probability more commonly remembered for the Hippy movement that originated in San Francisco in the mid-1960s and which promoted a culture of "free love."

Women were not the only group seeking equal treatment within the broader limits of the sexual revolution, and by the late-1960s the 'Gay Liberation' movement also began to gather momentum, as Gitlin underlines:

The new identity was: gay. In bohemian neighbourhoods, gays developed a territorial base, with a matrix of bars, associations, publications, theatres, churches, writers, comedians, professional services, and eventually political representatives. Gayness became a sort of ethnicity with its own codes of recognition, rituals, parades, sacred days, even its own flag with a rainbow motif.

(1995: 142-43)

The movement itself can be said to have begun in the 1950s with the founding of Harry Hay's 'Mattachine Society', but it was during the 1960s that the movement began to gain significant ground. In 1963, the Society for Individual Rights was founded in San Francisco to help organise the gay community, and by the mid-1960s demonstrations and conferences were being held to protest against the exclusion of homosexuals in the Armed Forces. However, the key turning point in the struggle for gay rights came about following the 1969 Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village, New York City, which led to the founding of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance and is regarded as having given birth to the modern gay rights movement.

And demands for fair treatment did not end there. Environmental protection also emerged as a popular concern during this period, particularly following the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) which highlighted the environmental impact of pesticides and the pollution caused by the chemical industries, and *The Population Bomb* (1968) by Paul R. Ehrlich which outlined the consequences to the environment of rapid population growth. The U.S. government paid heed to the warnings and took several legislative steps toward environmental protection by way of the Clean Air Act (1963), the signing into law of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by President Nixon in 1970, and 1972 saw the passing of the Federal Water Pollution Control Amendments as well as a ban on the use of the pesticide Dichloro-Diphenyl-Dichloromethane (DDT).

Tied in with conservation of the environment came an upsurge in concern for animal welfare. The Laboratory Animal Welfare Act was passed in 1966, and in 1972 President Nixon passed the Endangered Species Act aimed at protecting imperilled species from extinction. However, it was following the publication of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975), commonly regarded as the bible of the animal rights movement, that the campaign for animal rights and particularly against vivisection took off. The late-1970s witnessed the emergence of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a particularly militant group associated with such criminal activities as breaking into animal testing laboratories and sabotaging fur manufacturers and abattoirs, and in 1980 an animal rights organisation calling itself 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) was founded in Norfolk, Virginia.

What is clear is that the demands for rights and protection epitomised by the civil rights movement were not solely restricted to bloodline-related grievances. Omi and Winant (1994: 4) highlight this by stating that:

By challenging existing patterns of race relations, the black movement created new political subjects, expanded the terrain of political struggle beyond "normal" politics, and inspired and galvanised a range of "new social movements"—student, antiwar, feminist, gay, environmental, etc.



These new political subjects emerged in the form of women and gays demanding equal rights, treatment, and opportunities, as well as additional concerns for the protection of the environment and animal welfare that had fallen on deaf ears in decades past. From this perspective, then, the 1960s and 1970s can be viewed as having given birth to the ‘interest group’ and ethnicity was simply one of many.

#### 4.5.5 State Sponsorship of Ethnicity

The surge in white ethnic sentiment certainly benefited from the state’s engagement in a variety of legislative and symbolic ways in what can rightly be called ethnic identity-promoting measures. In 1970, the Chicago Democratic Congressman Roman C. Pucinski introduced a bill calling for the U.S. government to establish and fund Ethnic Heritage Studies Centres in order to, in John J. Miller’s words, “teach white ethnic children about their white ethnic heritage and also promote the idea of cultural pluralism” (1998: 108). The bill was rejected, but in 1972 President Nixon signed into law a scaled-back version in the form of the Ethnic Heritage Studies Programme Act following “testimony from ethnic spokesmen denouncing the melting pot as a conspiracy to homogenise America” (Schlesinger, 1998: 49). The Act, which materialised as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) was initiated with the aim of providing federal assistance to those that wished to “learn about the nature of their own cultural heritage, and to study the contributions of the cultural heritages of the other ethnic groups of the Nation” (Thernstrom et al., 1980: 343). Despite receiving the somewhat paltry sum of around \$2 million per year, the Programme signified a decisive shift away from the Anglo-conformist approach to education that had characterised the United States’ schooling system particularly at the height of the Americanization era. For those sharing Congressman Pucinski’s outlook, the Act was undeniably a step in the right direction, but to critics such as Schlesinger “by applying the ethnic ideology to all Americans, [the Act] compromised the historic right of Americans to decide their ethnic identities for themselves” and “ignored the millions of Americans...who refused identification with any particular ethnic group” (1998: 49). Nevertheless, the availability of federal funding can ultimately be said to have dawned a new era of ethnic scholarship, a significant

example of which came about in the form of the *Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980). The Programme also contributed to the advancement of ethnic studies courses as well as to the compilation of miscellaneous neighbourhood histories (Jacobson, 2006).

However, the role of the state as a key player with regard to the white ethnic upsurge came to the forefront in 1976, the bicentennial year of American independence, and it was Ellis Island that became a focal point for both white ethnics and the state. The island had, of course, been the chief port of entry into the United States for the majority of white ethnic immigrants during the great waves of immigration in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, yet the now celebrated immigration station had fallen into both disuse and disrepair as a result of the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 which had reduced immigration to a trickle before the island was closed for business indefinitely in 1954. In 1965, President Johnson enhanced the prospects of the forsaken island and authorised its inclusion as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument under the control of the National Park Service. Tours of the island began in 1976, the bicentennial year, and prompted calls for its restoration to honour the site at which millions of immigrants had first arrived, and had ‘found freedom’, on American soil. Peter Sammartino, the son of Ellis Island immigrants and founder and chancellor of the largest private university in New Jersey, established the Ellis Island Restoration Committee and successfully lobbied Congress for funding toward bringing it back from dereliction. In 1982, the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Commission was established, and by 1990 a restored and refurbished Ellis Island Immigration Museum was opened to the public.

The significance of the Ellis Island project is two-fold. The first is that of the timing of its appearance, albeit initially within limited circles. The bicentenary was indeed a time of remembrance, a look back at the nation’s journey through history as well as its many remarkable achievements over two centuries of independent existence. Extensive coverage focusing upon the nation’s history by the state machinery and the media would have inexorably led many Americans to ponder upon their own personal and family histories within the context of that of the nation’s as a whole. For most white ethnics that

history began at Ellis Island, and thus a renewed interest in the welfare of the island, within the context of the bicentenary, should perhaps not have come as a complete surprise. The second significant point is that Ellis Island was the port of entry almost exclusively for white ethnic immigrants admitted into the country as ‘free whites’. Despite the core ethos of the campaign having been to reinstate the island as a central place in America’s immigration history, and despite the ultimate inclusion of all immigrant groups within the island’s museum, the fact remains that only white ethnics could have had any measure of personal identification or family connection with it and thus the millions of dollars worth of public funds pumped into its restoration was almost entirely in honour not of non-white voluntary or involuntary immigrants but exclusively of white ethnic immigrants. It is undoubtedly for this reason that, in relation to the white ethnic upsurge, Jacobson contends that “In the symbolism it deployed and the narratives it generated, the project to restore and sanctify Ellis Island represents the most significant instance of state sponsorship at play” (2006: 60).

The acceptability of white ethnicities was also drawn attention to by presidential visits to the Old World. The first of such visits was that of John F. Kennedy, who had already glorified America’s immigrant past in *A Nation of Immigrants* (1964 [1958]) which outlined his arguments for the liberalisation of immigration controls. Yet Kennedy’s visit five months prior to his assassination to the Irish port of New Ross from where his great-grandfather had departed in 1848, and his arrival at his ancestral home in Dunganstown where he was greeted by fifteen long-lost cousins and a banner with the words “Welcome home, Mr. President” highlighted both the possibility and acceptability that one could be both American and something else. A similar but far more generationally-removed trip was undertaken by President Nixon in 1970 to Timahoe, Co. Kildare from where his Quaker forebears had departed three centuries earlier. Not only did Nixon openly acknowledge his ‘Irishness’ but also upon arrival at Shannon Airport declared that:

...I can assure you that we in the United States are very appreciative of the enormous contribution that has been made of those of Irish backgrounds to all of American life, not just in the field of politics but in the field of business, in the field

of the arts, in any area that you choose. The Irish have added a warmth to the American diverse personality, a sense of humour, a spirit, a courage, character for which we will be eternally grateful.

(R. Nixon (1970), cited from “The American Presidency Project,” 2008)

By the early 1980s, Ballyporeen, a small village in Co. Tipperary, soon began to cash in on being the ancestral home of President Reagan and small businesses had already begun producing Ronald Reagan key chains and silk-screen prints well before his visit in 1984, and following which the Irish Tourist Board promptly built a Ronald Reagan Visitor Centre. Upon arrival in the village where his great-grandfather had lived until the potato famine of the 1840s, Reagan proclaimed his pride in his Irish ethnicity by declaring “Today I come back to you as a descendant of people who were buried here in paupers’ graves” (cited in O’Dowd, 2004).

All three presidential ‘return’ visits were, admittedly, to the same country—to Ireland—and not to any southern or eastern European states. But that was beside the point. The actual ethnic backgrounds of the three presidents were immaterial. What mattered most was that their ‘welcome home’ visits, their exceedingly warm receptions, and their generous words regarding their own ethnic ancestries underlined that being ethnic need not be ‘un-American’. After all, if the nation’s First Citizen could publicly reveal ties to, and great affection for, another country then embracing ethnicity was surely permissible for all Americans. The visits drew attention to the notion that everyone came from somewhere, and that somewhere need not be forgotten if one already knew or could somehow determine where that somewhere is. In this respect, then, the Kennedy, Nixon, and Reagan visits authenticated trans-national and hyphenated identities that in years gone by had typically been considered to have been at best unpatriotic and, at worst, treacherous.

#### 4.5.6 International Context

The magnitude of social upheaval in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s makes it easy to overlook the possibility that the ethnic upsurge may not have a strictly national explanation. In fact, ethnicity had become something of a hot topic on a global scale, owing much to the fact that in the quarter-century following Rosa Parks' refusal to move from her seat over seventy nations around the world were granted independence from a former colonial ruler. This newfound freedom from foreign domination in turn triggered numerous inter-group conflicts as various indigenous ethnic groups vied for overall control of their newly independent homelands. Thus, according to Burgess, ethnicity had become a global focal point as a result of the "problems of national integration in postcolonial societies with their enormous cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities" (1978: 271). The significance of independence movements abroad to the American civil rights movement is highlighted by the attendance of none other than Martin Luther King, Jr. at Ghana's independence ceremony in 1957. All in all, independence movements, civil unrest, and interethnic group conflict in numerous parts of the world drew attention to questions regarding the balance of power between myriad ethnic groups cohabiting within the same national boundaries.

However, although much attention relating to ethnic movements and conflicts around the world was focused primarily on countries in the developing world that had or were moving toward independent statehood, ethnic movements similarly began to emerge within numerous Western democracies. In fact, Fishman goes as far as to state that:

The ethnic revival in the United States between the mid-60s and mid-70s co-occurred with somewhat similar phenomena in many other parts of the democratic capitalist world. Although most of the other occurrences involved indigenous minorities (Welsh, Irish, Scots, Bretons, Alsatians, Frisians, Catalons, Basques, etc.), several immigrant settings also revealed a quickening of minority ethnocultural effort: e.g., among *Gastarbeiter* immigrants in Western and Northern Europe, among "non-Founding" minorities in Canada, among Euroimmigrants in Australia, etc. Any theory of the ethnic revival in the U.S.A. must cope, therefore, with its co-occurrence in time with both indigenous and immigrant revivals in

many and quite separate parts of the Western world.

(1985: 508, original italics)

Undoubtedly a key factor in the development of ethnic movements around the world was the increasing scope of the global communications media. The dissemination of information via the printed press, radio, and television led to a ripple effect which “spread the news about ethnic symbols, conflicts, rhetoric, and goals” (Burgess, 1978: 279) and drew attention to ethnicity as a potential mobilising principle around which to struggle against collective grievance. As a result, due to increasing accessibility to information, ethnic group-based activities in one part of the world could easily have prompted copycat movements in other parts.

In this respect, then, the ethnic movement in the United States can be argued to have been simply one of many actors on a vast and diverse global ethnic stage, and many young white ethnics in America were undoubtedly stirred by such foreign events as the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973, the Northern Ireland “Troubles” that commenced in the mid- to late-1960s, the “Prague Spring” of 1968, the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974, and the Polish workers’ struggle of the late-1970s onward. The extent of white ethnic emotional involvement in ‘homeland’ events took the form of new organisations founded for causes overseas such as the American Committee for Democracy and Freedom in Greece (1967), the National Association for Irish Justice (1968), the Serbian National Committee (1968), American Students for Israel (1969), the Latvian Foundation (1970), and the Irish Northern Aid Committee founded in 1970 (Jacobson, 2006). However, the most striking manifestation of ethnic group solidarity undoubtedly came in the form of the Jewish American response to the Arab-Israeli conflicts. According to Papajohn:

The war in 1967 stirred a deep interest in thousands of young American Jews, and the Israeli victory after only six days of fighting was experienced by them as a personal triumph. Many followed up their emotional involvement in this conflict by going to Israel and working, with the clear purpose of making a contribution to Israel.... When the Israeli-Arab conflict was activated again in 1973, the response

of American Jews was overwhelming. Young men and women left their schools and jobs and professions and travelled to Israel to participate in whatever way they could.

(1999: 127-28)

Jacobson (2002) highlights that in New York City alone over two thousand Jewish Americans volunteered for military service in Israel following the Six Day War of 1967, in scenes reminiscent of the tens of thousands of reservists that departed for Europe during the First World War. However, a crucial difference lies in the fact that the Americans that departed for Israel were, for the most part, neither foreign-born nor, given the fact that the majority were descended from Eastern European Jews, had any direct family connections within living memory to this recently created Middle-Eastern state and it would similarly be fair to assume that an overwhelming majority had never before set foot on Israeli soil.

The response of Jewish Americans to the Arab-Israeli conflict is, of course, a unique case in point which must take into account Jewish history and the significance of the creation of Israel. Yet it does provide an illustrative example of how foreign events were capable of stirring the emotions of those born and raised in the United States; after all, to Jewish Americans, Israelis were not compatriots but, rather, ethno-religious brothers and sisters. For many other young white ethnics, an increased awareness of, and subsequent profound interest in, events transpiring in their ancestors' countries of origin fuelled notions among many that they were more than just 'American', and contributed to a growing belief that they were part of an ethnic diaspora forever connected to an ethnic homeland regardless of geographic dislocation and generational distance. Few, if any, had any intention of 'returning' to the land of their forebears, but events abroad can be argued to have played a significant role in striking an emotional chord among American white ethnics. With this in mind, and in the overall scheme of things, the ethnic movement in the United States was in all probability not a purely American phenomenon.

#### 4.5.7 Ramifications of the White Ethnic Movement

Whether it was one factor or a combination of factors that persuaded white ethnics to openly and vigorously embrace ethnic identities during the 1960s and 1970s, the result was categorical: the effective neutralisation of the black movement. What overall role blacks themselves played in contributing to this is open to question, but the enthusiastic taking up of the redefinition of blacks at the time as ‘African Americans’ certainly did not do them any favours. Indeed, according to one of the key advocates of the white ethnic movement:

Jesse Jackson took the emphasis off race and began speaking of the black experience in the United States as an African experience in the way we would speak, in my case, of a Slovak experience, or an Italian experience. The concept of ethnicity can help us to understand one another by analogy as we learn to look in the experiences of others for correlates of things we have experienced ourselves, and to find in each group something different that we have to learn, if we want to understand what it is to be an American.

(Novak, 1996: 395)

Novak arguably missed the point here, and the popularity of the term ‘African American’ was more than likely an expression of the desire among American blacks to define themselves from within for the first time in American history rather than continue to be classified from without. However, Novak does touch upon a crucial point by claiming that the term ‘African American’ made comparable the black experience with the white ethnic experience. The white ethnic movement had led to the popularisation of ethnicity since the significance of ancestry could no longer be monopolised by non-white Americans. In effect, ethnicity became mainstream. According to Papajohn, this sea change in opinion with regard to ethno-racial origins “made it possible for ethnic Americans to move in and out of their subcultures without the aversive consequences of previous years” (1999: 133). Yet Isaacs is probably more attuned to the actual impact of this as he states in what can only be regarded as an extreme ethnicist view that:

The message...is that if it is beautiful to be black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, or



Indian, then it has to be more beautiful still to be Irish, Italian, Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, Slovak, Greek, Armenian, or whatever origins indicate that you can now be proud to know that you are.

(1975: 209)

The fact is that the impact of the emergence of white ethnic identities, and the subsequent entry of ethnicity into the mainstream, had a devastating impact on black advancement.

In fact, one result of the ethnic revival was to eclipse the uniqueness of the African-American experience. Once ethnicity was everywhere, it was, in a sense, nowhere, and the black experience was rhetorically neutralised. This blur was frequently well-meaning but it was also misleading, even euphemistic. It obscured the antagonisms and discriminations that whites had imposed on blacks for more than three centuries.

(Gitlin, 1995: 163)

Thus, whether it was a racial backlash in opposition to black advancement or as a result of a sincere and ingenuous search for identity during one of the most tumultuous periods in American history, the rapid embracing of white ethnic identities during the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly played a major role in the reconfiguration of America's racial logic, the consequences of which will be examined in Chapter 6.

### Part III – White Ethnicities: Before and After

## Chapter 5 – The Whitening of White Ethnicities

The upsurge in white ethnic themes, interests, and concerns in the 1960s and 1970s certainly made it appear as if white ethnic identities had been reawakened and renewed. The enthusiastic embracing of Old World identities by later-generation white ethnics indicated that many were refusing to relinquish their immigrant ethnic histories, particularly at a time when matters of race and ethnicity had, in the hands of many others, dramatically crossed the threshold into the realm of mainstream politics. Amid the fervent white ethnic activity of the period and claims of an ‘ethnic revival’, however, the question arises as to whether white ethnicities could have been ‘revived’ in any meaningful sense. The underlying principle of straight-line assimilation theory posits that immigrant ethnic groups become progressively assimilated from the point of immigration, and previous chapters have succinctly alluded to the gradual ‘whitening’ and incorporation of southern and eastern European ethnic groups into American society. Be that as it may, the events of the 1960s and 1970s warrant the examination of the pre-civil rights decline in white ethnicities in greater detail in order to assess the extent to which the activities of the period represented a genuine return to ethnicity. This chapter focuses upon four key factors which undoubtedly affected, and in some respects determined, the prospects of such a return or ‘revival’.

### 5.1 Generational Distance

The significance of generational distance lies in the fact that it was primarily later-generation American-born white ethnics, and not immigrants, that were enthusiastically asserting southern and eastern European national-origin identities in the 1960s and 1970s. Alba (1990) pertinently elucidates the relevance of generational distance to ethnic continuity as he states that:

*Generation*, of course, refers to distance in descent from the point of immigration to the United States. (By convention, generations are numbered starting with the immigrants as the “first,” so that their children are the “second,” their

grandchildren are the “third,” etc.) Generally speaking, ethnic differences appear to be the strongest among the generations closest to the immigrant experience and grow fainter among those further away. This generational progression among individuals and families, insofar as it exists, is predictive of ethnic *group* change because the general composition of ethnic groups changes over time.

(1990: 5, original italics)

Following the two great waves of southern and eastern European immigrants in the period 1880-1920, several key sociologists and students of race relations devoted significant attention to studying white ethnic immigrant groups and subsequently tendered hypotheses regarding the future of white ethnics in America. To Robert Park at the Chicago School, one of the foremost students of immigrant adaptation, the assimilation of white ethnics was governed by a natural process whereby immigrant ethnic groups would gradually relinquish former cultural traits and behavioural patterns in favour of those of the host society and consequently come to share in the common culture and gain equal access to the prevailing social structure. Park’s perspective regarding immigrant assimilation was underpinned by his ‘race relations cycle’ which involved four key stages:

The race relations cycle which takes the form, to state it abstractly, of contact, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation, is apparently progressive and irreversible. Customs regulations, immigration restrictions and racial barriers may slacken the tempo of the movement; may perhaps halt it altogether for a time; but cannot change its direction; cannot at any rate, reverse it.

(Park, 1950: 150)

Contact between different ethnic groups, according to Park, would initially give rise to conflict and competition and create a new set of social circumstances. These new circumstances would subsequently prompt readjustment and accommodation, ultimately leading to primary contact across group boundaries that would in turn bring about intermarriage. This path to comprehensive assimilation was unavoidable since it was

Park's view that "peoples and races who live together, sharing in the same economy, inevitably interbreed, and in this way if in no other, the relations which were merely co-operative and economic become social and cultural" (1928: 164). Hence, to Park, assimilation was an avoidable process that once begun could not be obstructed or veered off track in the long-run.

This unidirectional theory was also taken up by Warner and Srole who in 1945, following their classic study of white ethnic groups in New Haven in the first half of the twentieth century, proposed a 'straight line assimilation' model to describe the socio-economic progression of European immigrant groups across the generations. According to their model, as with Park's race relations cycle, with each successive generation ethnic groups would gradually lose their distinctive behaviour and traits and become incorporated into the mainstream. Warner's and Srole's model was essentially based on generational replacement, suggesting that each subsequent generation from the point of immigration became further removed from the immigrant ethnic group to more closely resemble the typical citizen. However, there were factors that could affect the rate of straight line assimilation and Warner and Srole distinguished between "light Caucasians" and "dark Caucasians" and posited that the rate of assimilation would inexorably be influenced by the degree of physical and cultural divergence from the host society. Warner and Srole nevertheless predicted that white ethnic groups would become fully assimilated and incorporated into the core of American society (Jacobson, 2002).

Gordon (1964) similarly provided a model of assimilation but went a few steps further in capturing the complexity of the assimilation process. Gordon identified seven stages, beginning with acculturation whereby the minority group adopts the cultural patterns of the host society, and culminating with 'civic assimilation' which was achieved when value and power conflict was no longer present. According to Gordon, acculturation did not automatically lead to the more advanced varieties of assimilation but it did signify the first step toward 'structural assimilation' which he considered to be "the keystone of the arch of assimilation" that would lead to "the disappearance of the ethnic group as a separate entity and the evaporation of its distinctive values" (1964: 81). Although

ambiguous regarding the time-scale, i.e. the number of generations over which comprehensive assimilation would be achieved, Gordon nevertheless prophesied that ethnic groups would in due course lose all of their distinctive characteristics and thus cease to exist as distinguishable social entities.

As has been established in previous chapters, first-generation immigrants from southern and eastern Europe faced considerable levels of societal prejudice upon arrival in the United States. Not only were their physical characteristics considered to be bordering on racial difference but they were also deemed culturally unfit in numerous ways for comprehensive participation within the core of American life. It is hardly surprising, then, that most immigrants set up home in predominantly ethnic neighbourhoods with others of common background and set up their own social networks, churches, and mutual aid societies. Many immigrant groups often sought employment in packs so that certain ethnic groups became synonymous with specific industrial sectors.

White ethnic immigrants commonly embodied a sojourner outlook and many had arrived in the United States with the sole intention of earning a large enough nest-egg with which to return home for a better life. This sojourner mentality was demonstrated by the departure of tens of thousands of immigrants to fight as reservists for their respective homelands during the First World War. Thus, for many immigrants the United States was no more than a temporary stepping stone to a better life at home in Europe. For those new immigrants that intended to stay in America permanently, high levels of societal prejudice undoubtedly convinced many that socioeconomic parity with the native white population was an unlikely prospect.

Many notable texts were written as regards the immigrant experience in the United States, of which Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912) and Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted* (1951) are perhaps most renowned. In one celebrated passage, Handlin describes the dejection experienced by many first-generation immigrants:

The ties, once severed, could never be replaced. The lonely man gazing out into the

darkness of the forest or upon the empty prairies or down the endless corridors of the city streets never saw a monument of his belonging. Detached from his past, he could hardly be sure of his own identity.... All the emotions once safely embedded by tradition and communal custom had now no stable foundation in reality.

(cited in Novak, 1996: 175)

To the first-generation ethnicity was thus a living tradition. Not only did it anchor them in the lands of their birth but it also typically influenced their degree of welcome in America, where they would live, where they would work, and their primary social contacts. The ethnic backgrounds of the first generation coloured their very perceptions of American life.

The scenario was considerably different for second-generation white ethnics—for that first generation born in America and, to some extent, for those that had arrived in the United States as children. The environments within which they were typically socialised were distinctly ethnic and significantly shaped by the values and traditions of their immigrant parents, yet they were often subjected to mandatory schooling policies and it was within the public schools that Americanizing forces went to work on the children of immigrants:

...in the United States, educators and policymakers were unyielding in their determination to maintain a centralised school system. Indeed, the “common school” was consciously designed to function as the chief instrument for assimilating the children of immigrants, and for producing a common culture out of the melange of immigrant groups that were pouring into the country. More than any other single factor, the public school undermined the capacity of immigrant groups to transmit their native culture to their American-born children.

(Steinberg, 1989: 54)

Many second-generation white ethnics were thus subjected to conflicting value systems

since the Americanism disseminated within the public schools often contradicted the ethnic values instilled in them via their socialisation in immigrant families and within ethnic communities. One striking example of this is demonstrated by immigrant children being taught to say ‘we’ when referring to America’s Pilgrim settlers and ‘they’ when referring to their own parents (Olneck and Lazerson, 1981). As a result of this continuous cultural conflict, Duncan (1933) states that:

On the streets, in the schools, from the English papers, and in the movies, the children of immigrants acquire ideas foreign to their parents. They attempt to carry these into their homes, but it is often impossible for their parents to comprehend them. Likewise the outside world ridicules the language and ideas which these children bring from their homes. As they grow older the struggle becomes keener, and isolation increases until many find themselves amused or disgusted strangers within their own homes.

(1933: 693)

The marginalisation of the second generation is embodied in Robert Park’s notion of the ‘marginal man’ who was compelled to assimilate into two divergent cultures and, as a result, “lives in two worlds but is not quite home in either” (1950: 51). It was Park’s view that:

If it turns out—as it frequently does—that the culture of the second generation seems a little thin and superficial as compared with that of the first, it is due, no doubt, to the fact that this second generation, having lost or abandoned the older cultural heritages, is not quite in possession of the new. In the long run this undoubtedly affects American life as a whole.

(1950: 27)

To Park, this variety of marginalisation was a never-ending process, which Gordon claims typically expressed itself in the form of “insecurity, moodiness, hypersensitivity, excessive self-consciousness, and nervous strain” (1964: 57). Irving L. Child similarly outlined three possible reactions to the second generation’s cultural quandary following



his study of second-generation Italians in New Haven in the late-1930s. In *Italian or American? The Second-Generation in Conflict* (1943), Child concluded that members of the second generation typically rebel against their ethnic backgrounds and wholeheartedly embrace mainstream values; remain within the structure of the ethnic background and maintain an ethnic identification; or become apathetic and abandon both rebellion and mainstream conformity (Rumbaut, 1994; Zhou and Bankston, 1996).

It is thus likely that during the height of the Americanization era and the prevailing anti-immigrant and xenophobic climate that characterised much of the first half of the twentieth century, ethnic self-hatred was not an uncommon trait among the second-generation offspring of southern and eastern European immigrants. This would certainly account for the disproportionately large number of second-generation white ethnics that enlisted in the armed forces during the Second World War, perhaps hoping to prove their Americanness by fighting and risking their lives for the United States. Feelings of marginalisation would have also undoubtedly played a part in the degree to which they imparted to their offspring the ethnic traditions of their own immigrant parents. During this period of American history, for those belonging to the second generation that willed to be accepted as Americans, being one generation away from foreignness would have been an insufferable burden to bear and one that many would have been unwilling to pass on to their own children.

The third-generation grandchildren of white ethnic immigrants therefore faced a yet different set of circumstances. Following his study, Duncan (1933) found that:

Very few third generation Americans appear to be interested in the customs and traditions of the racial or national groups of their grandparents or in their national histories. They are so far removed that they have lost touch with these things. The process of Americanization is so rapid, and the attitudes of the groups with whom they associate are so anti-foreign, that they are indifferent if not antagonistic... All are so far removed from the lands of their grandparents that they feel no connection with these nations or their problems, and see no reason why the fact that their grandparents came from a foreign country should cause them to be considered in

the process of assimilation.

(1933: 829/831)

The third generation was thus typically regarded as being untouched by their relatively recent foreign descent. Their perceptions, attitudes, and outlooks resembled far more closely those of mainstream society than those pertaining to the ethnic value systems of their immigrant grandparents. The decisive cultural rift between the first the second generations effectively neutralised ethnicity's means of access to the third generation, by which time the ethnic traditions of the immigrant group had been either "lost by attrition or thrown off for advantage" (Kallen, [1924] 1998: 87). The grandchildren of southern and eastern European ethnics were thus considered to be free from the stigma of foreignness that had characterised the first generation and that which had caused many of their second generation parents to suffer wounded identities.

Because of the degree to which the third generation is presumed to be assimilated into the prevailing mainstream, the great-grandchildren of immigrants, the fourth generation, are rarely ever taken into account within analyses of assimilation and ethnic continuity. Unlike their third-generation parents who may have had the option of turning to their immigrant grandparents as a point of cultural reference and for information regarding family origins and histories, the fourth generation is typically the first to have no living ties to the traditions of the ancestral homeland. As a result, even should the desire arise to investigate the family tree, members of the fourth generation can at best turn only to their second-generation grandparents—i.e. those typically born in the United States, that had experienced the full brunt of marginalisation, and that had spent a sizeable part of their youth disassociating themselves from their ethnic communities.

As aforementioned, the relevance of the generational progression of ethnicity lies in the fact that it was predominantly later-generation ethnics that were most vociferous in asserting their ethnic backgrounds during the upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s. The ethnic reverie was thus for the most part fuelled not by the immigrant generation nor their second-generation offspring, but by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of

immigrants who were appreciably detached from the immigrant experience and essentially assimilated into the very core of the American socioeconomic structure.

#### 5.1.1 Hansen's Law

To some, however, the upsurge in ethnic expressions at the hands of later-generation white ethnics proved the validity of 'Hansen's Law', which stems from a speech delivered in 1937 by Marcus Lee Hansen to the Augustana Historical Society of Rock Island, Illinois, an organisation dedicated to the study of the Swedish experience in the United States. Much of Hansen's research was focused upon the European immigrant experience in America, and he had become aware of the decisive cultural fracture between the first and second generations. Hansen did not, however, believe that the third generation necessarily continued the process of assimilation without question. Unlike the unidirectional assimilation models put forward by sociologists at the Chicago School that provided the theoretical foundations of the melting pot symbol, and in contrast to Kallen's brand of cultural pluralism that made a case for unhindered ethnic continuity, it was Hansen's view that neither position captured the true essence of the generational progression of ethnicity in the United States.

As a result of his in-depth research on the immigrant experience in America, Hansen was mindful of the myriad difficulties faced by the second-generation. "The sons and daughters of the immigrants were really in a most uncomfortable position," Hansen contends, "subjected to the criticism and taunts of the native Americans and to the criticism and taunts of their elders as well" ([1937] 1987: 12-13). For that reason, according to Hansen:

As soon as he was free economically, an independence that usually came several years before he was free legally, the son struck out for himself. He wanted to forget everything: the foreign language that left an unmistakable trace in his English speech, the religion that continually recalled childhood struggles, the family customs that should have been the happiest of all memories. He wanted to be away from all physical reminders of early days, in an environment so different, so

American, that all associates naturally assumed that he was as American as they.

([1937] 1987: 13)

Hansen recognised the duality experienced by the children of immigrants who were effectively caught between two cultural systems and which led to them being considered too American at home and too foreign outside it. The primary objective of those belonging to the second generation was, therefore, to escape from the confines of the ethnic group within which they had been raised at the earliest possible opportunity. However, as a direct consequence of this second-generation flight, members of the third generation typically did not suffer from the cultural complexes of their parents and to a large extent, in manners of speech and material wealth, corresponded to the archetypal American. Thus, instead of continuing to erode, Hansen claimed that ethnicity would stage a comeback and that the third generation, precisely because it was largely assimilated and sufficiently detached from its immigrant forebears, would return to ethnicity and salvage it from further erosion. This was because, as Hansen states:

They have no reason to feel any inferiority when they look about them. They are American born. Their speech is the same as that of those with whom they associate. Their material wealth is the average possession of the typical citizen. When anyone speaks to him about immigrants he always makes it clear that he has in mind the more recent hordes that have been pouring through the gates and any suggestion that the onrush should be stemmed is usually prefaced with the remark that recent immigrants are not so desirable as the pioneers that arrived in earlier times.

([1937]: 1987: 16-17)

Hansen's view that ethnicity would not be lost in the hands of the third generation was certainly a popular one among immigrant ethnic groups, and it is understandable how his principle has come to be utilised in order to account for the upsurge in ethnic expressions by third-generation white ethnics during the 1960s and 1970s. But even should his contention that "what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember" be

accepted as having been embodied by later-generation white ethnics, the sheer magnitude of the upsurge was something that Hansen could not possibly have foreseen. The previous chapter has examined the various factors that instigated and fuelled white ethnic activity during this period, and it is clear that it was not solely determined by a passing interest in the traditions of immigrant forebears. White ethnicities clearly emerged, or re-emerged, during this period in response to a variety of socio-economic and political developments that were unique unto the period and thus were, for the most part, not so much revived as acquired and utilised. The white ethnic activities of the 1960s and 1970s embodied far more than just “third generation interest.”

## 5.2 Language Loss

As highlighted in Chapter 3, European mother tongues have not had a good record of survival in the United States, particularly in view of the near omnipresence of the English language. Dutch and German immigrant groups were perhaps historically the most successful at preserving their native languages, but after the English language was introduced into Dutch schools shortly prior to independence and when attempts to gain official status for the German language were rebuffed in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century even these two formerly flourishing languages began to peter out (Parillo, 1994). “The United States is a rather unforgiving country when it comes to language use,” Portes and Schauffler contend, “in no other country are foreign languages extinguished with such speed” (1996: 432/435).

The arrival of large numbers of new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century would once again raise the conspicuousness of foreign tongues on the American landscape. Whatever prospects these new languages had for survival were drastically curtailed following the onset of the First World War as foreign language-use came to be viewed with heightened suspicion. Loyalty to the United States was to be proven, at least in part, via linguistic loyalty to English and President Roosevelt declared to German-speaking Americans on the eve of the war that “We have room but for one language here, and that is the English language; for we intend to see that

the crucible turns out people as Americans, and not as dwellers of a polyglot boarding house” (cited in Portes and Hao, 2002: 889). The First World War in conjunction with the emergent ‘Red Scare’ that followed the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 produced a general climate of xenophobia and an aversion to all things foreign. “Linguistic uniformity was seen as essential to rooting out alien conspiracies,” Crawford maintains, and “an ideological link was established between speaking ‘good English’ and being a ‘good American’” (2000: 21).

Whilst the prospect of being considered alien conspirators may have had a dampening effect on the public use of mother-tongues by adult immigrants, their children were far easier targets. During the Americanization era that had characterised much of the first quarter of the twentieth century, public schools had played a decisive role in the rapid Anglicisation of immigrant children:

Immigrant children were taught that their own nativeness was to be despised and cast aside in favour of all that was “American.” Language was an inherent part of that nativeness, and the sooner one’s native language was replaced by English, the brighter one’s prospects for success in the new land would be.

(Dicker, 2002: 67-68)

The assault on foreign mother-tongues was thus two-pronged: socially their use became a faux pas since foreign languages had become markers of potential treachery; and Americanization campaigns simultaneously endorsed the image of the archetypal or ‘true’ American as one that could speak English and naught else.

A further blow came in the form of the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, an act specifically devised to restrict further immigration from southern and eastern Europe. What the immigration hiatus achieved was to contain, and to inevitably reduce via mortality, the number of native speakers of southern and eastern European languages, thus leaving an ever-decreasing pool of primary speakers with which to ensure linguistic continuity. The

Second World War added further pressure on those that continued to speak their native languages, particularly for those whose countries of origin were allied with the enemy. During this time it was not, for instance, unusual for Italian clubs and retailers to put up notices stating “*No Italian Spoken for the Duration of the War*” (Di Stasi, 1997: 172).

Even in the absence of vigorous Americanization campaigns, wars, and immigration acts, native languages are generally understood to be typically governed by a “three-generation process” (Portes and Hao, 2002: 890). The first generation, the immigrants, retain proficiency in and loyalty to the native language and attain sufficient knowledge of English as is necessary to work and in order to get by in American society. Their children, the second generation, are often socialised in the native language within the home but are fluent in English as a result of public schooling and English-speaking friendship circles. By the time the third generation, the grandchildren of the immigrants, reaches maturity there has more often than not been a complete language shift to English. This shift in language use is presumed to be due to the imperfect socialisation of the second generation whose members are generally presumed to lack the depth of acculturative experience in the native language in comparison to their immigrant parents. Because of this, and because of greater fluency in English, the third generation is typically socialised with English as the sole primary language.

The three generation process is not, however, the only possibility. First generation immigrants can themselves begin the process of language shift either out of conscious choice or if the opportunity to interact with other speakers is lacking. In this case, their second generation offspring would subsequently be monolingual English-speakers. Language shift can also be completed by the second generation should immigrant parents, despite retaining loyalty to their mother tongues, refrain from socialising their offspring in the native language for fear of it hindering their assimilation and prospects. The second generation can also refuse to speak it, as Duncan (1933) discovered:

The reactions of the children of immigrants to the language of their parents are interesting indeed...Through the influence of other children they come to despise

anything foreign, and refuse to speak the language because it identifies them with foreigners.

(1933: 698)

Mother tongues can also survive beyond the third generation, particularly if primary socialisation takes place within an ethnic enclave. Paulston (1994) found that the Greek community in Pittsburgh was characterised by a four-generation language shift due to factors such as the high status of the Greek written language, the formal teaching of the language in Orthodox Greek churches in the area, and the arranged marriages of later-generation Greek-Americans to more recent arrivals from Greece. Pittsburgh's Italian community, on the other hand, was consistent with the three generation process mainly because the community did not have institutional support for the native language compared to its Greek counterpart and also because the importance placed on Roman Catholicism, also shared by the English-speaking Irish community, exceeded that placed on the mother tongue.

What the case of the Italian community in Pittsburgh bears out is that if left untouched and/or if conscious efforts are not made to effect the transmission of native languages to the next generation, mother tongues commonly peter out by the third generation. The case of the Italian-Pittsburghians also highlights the importance of priorities which, as aforementioned, can lead to a diminution in the importance attached to the native language. This is a view upheld by Edwards (1985) who argues that language shift among white ethnics has been more a rational choice than a result of overpowering social forces:

As regards ethnic language itself, there has not been much legal or official pressure on ethnic-group speakers to abandon the mother-tongue; the important factor has typically been the perceived advantage of life in the mainstream... This is not to say that minorities would not have preferred a Utopian society with mainstream accessibility *and* complete cultural and linguistic retention. Choices had to be made. These were not always easy or welcomed in themselves but it is clear that communicative language, at any rate, was a dispensable commodity for most



groups.

(1985: 140-41, original italics)

Edwards' point is that had ethnic groups genuinely wished to ensure the survival of mother tongues across the generations, there was no prescribed reason why they could not have. According to this line of reasoning, then, the dwindling of ethnic languages over a mere handful of generations in the United States is indicative of its minimal priority in the eyes of its native speakers.

Ethnic longevity is not, however, necessarily contingent upon the perpetuation of a distinct linguistic tradition, and one need not look very far in order to unearth cases in which boundaries have persisted between groups sharing a common language. In the case of the United States, the historic treatment of blacks is a prime example of the maintenance of salient social boundaries between two groups that essentially shared both a common language and common faith. A distinct language is therefore certainly not a precondition for the existence and persistence of ethnic boundaries and therefore the significance of language to the potency of the ethnic boundary can be routinely over-rated. Gordon (1964) argues this point in his account of structural pluralism as he states that "*It is possible for separate sub-societies to continue their existence even while the cultural differences between them become progressively reduced and even in greater part eliminated*" (1964: 158, original italics). The thrust of Gordon's argument is that as long as ethnic groups continue to organise their communal life along ethnic lines, a social boundary can be sustained even if there is little within the boundary itself to make the group distinguishable from any other. Barth (1969) also put forward this view when he jettisoned culture altogether from his model of ethnicity and emphasised the overarching importance of the ethnic boundary as opposed to "*the cultural stuff that it encloses*" (1969: 300). Within the American context, according to Gordon's and Barth's lines of reasoning, it was entirely feasible for ethnic groups to perpetuate their sub-societies in the face of a complete language shift to English as long as the provision of goods and services, schooling, social networks and institutions were organised primarily along ethnic lines.

However, this prospect is really only credible within an ethnic enclave, and many that were 'returning' to ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s were largely doing so from within the dispersed and less ethnically structured heterogeneous suburbs. In this case the significance of language can therefore also be gravely under-rated. Indeed, regardless of whether a sense of community and/or identity can persist following language shift, in the absence of a legally- and socially-enforced stratification akin to that which had historically been in place between blacks and whites, language performs a vital role in demarcating ethnic boundaries and as a lightning rod that instantaneously identifies the in-group and the out-group:

Language has not only a cultural significance as a conveyor of special meanings, but it also provides a way of marking out ethnic boundaries. Obviously, speech in a mother tongue cuts out anyone who does not know the language and thus provides a way of communicating things intended to be understood only by those who share an ethnic bond.

(Alba, 1990: 84)

The bond between those that share an ethnic mother tongue thus constitutes a vital ingredient of group consciousness that distinguishes the in-group from the out-group. Hence, although language is typically one of the first aspects of the ethnic culture to be dispensed with, it can also play a decisive role in the group's very cohesion and continuity.

Ethnic traditions are also deeply rooted in their respective mother tongues and language shift can therefore lead to a diminution in the salience of such traditions. This is given that later-generation ethnics simply do not possess the tools, in this case language, with which to access the body of knowledge and the wealth of experience which lie at the core of the ethnic culture. According to Steinberg (1989):

Language is important not only in itself, but also because it shapes cultural perceptions and attitudes. To be sure, ethnic distinctiveness can and does endure after the mother tongue is lost, but it is equally clear that a vital link to the cultural

past has been severed. The almost complete break in language transmission between the second and third generations marks a decisive stage in the assimilation process...

(1989: 46)

The significance of language to the shaping of cultural perceptions and attitudes can, therefore, be crucial. For later generation ethnics that have undergone language shift, the capacity of the ethnic language to influence their perceptions and attitudes is greatly diminished. Thus, when English becomes the primary medium of communication the assimilation of ideas, outlooks, and cultural insight takes place far more easily from English-language sources. The resulting effect is that the ethnic culture has a declining influence upon the cultural makeup of later-generation ethnics since its vehicle of diffusion effectively falls on deaf ears. Language shift to English thus inhibits “active participation in those aspects of ethnic culture that depend on language and in the forging of ethnic social boundaries through language” (Alba, 1990: 98).

As aforementioned, language-use acts as an ethnic marker distinguishing speakers from non-speakers and as a boundary separating those of different ethnic backgrounds. Hence, the waning of ethnic languages as boundary-markers must therefore contribute to the weakening of social boundaries between members of various backgrounds. To revisit once again the case of the Italian-Pittsburghians, the importance placed on faith superseded that placed on the actual language in which the religion was observed. As a result, it was not uncommon for Italians in Pittsburgh to attend mass at Irish churches within which services were conducted in English. For later-generation Italians that had undergone language shift, then, it made more sense to attend religious services conducted in a language they understood than to remain within an ethnic church whose services were for the most part unintelligible to them. The inevitable result of such a scenario is that the social boundaries between the two groups, in this case the Irish and the Italians, is diminished since they are brought together by a common faith which is observed in a common language.

In the face of dwindling numbers that can comprehend the ethnic mother tongue, institutions and organisations established along ethnic lines are effectively forced to adapt to prevailing circumstances in order to retain membership. Ethnic ceremonies and festivities once conducted in the native language often shift to English which in itself reduces both cultural authenticity and the salience of the ethnic boundary. The permeation of ethnic boundaries occurs in two ways: the content of the activity itself is transformed by cultural infusions and interpretations in the majority language; and the shift to English makes ethnic outsiders privy to the content and hence reduces its exclusivity. This democratisation as a result of language shift may be valued in itself, but it undoubtedly affects the continuity of the ethnic culture and the sanctity of the cultural boundaries separating those of different backgrounds. The result is the dilution of ethnic content and the infusion of mainstream cultural trappings:

Indeed, the ethnic sub-societies have acquired so many cultural trappings of the society at large that it is not always clear whether they function to preserve ethnicity or to facilitate assimilation. What is especially problematic for ethnic survival is that both of these processes occur simultaneously. In attempting to preserve ethnicity and curtail the loss of more assimilated members, the ethnic sub-societies must adapt to the prevailing culture, but in doing so, they inevitably promote assimilation of the less assimilated members of the community. This is the bind in which all ethnic groups in America find themselves: they are practically forced to give up their cultures in order to save them.

(Steinberg, 1989: 67-68)

The fact of the matter is that all of these factors—Americanization campaigns, heightened xenophobia in response to far-off events, a legally-imposed immigration hiatus, and language shift (whether conscious and/or unconscious)—had come into fruition in the decades leading up to the white ethnic upsurge. In a number of timely studies compiled and published as *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups* (1966), Joshua Fishman reveals a decisive break in language transmission between the second and third generations. According to his data, Italian was

spoken by 2,300,000 second-generation Italians but by only 147,000 of the third generation. The Polish language was spoken by 1,516,000 second-generation Poles but by only 87,000 third-generation Poles. Similarly, the Yiddish language, spoken by the majority of eastern European Jews, dropped from 422,000 second-generation speakers to just 39,000 of the third generation. Immediately prior to the ethnic upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s, then, the native languages of many southern and eastern European immigrant groups, now in the hands of later-generation white ethnics, had been heading speedily into oblivion.

The upsurge in white ethnic concerns during the 1960s and 1970s was thus primarily organised, utilised, and expressed not in native tongues but in English. Hence, the very language that articulated the alleged revival of ethnicity was based by and large upon mainstream terminology. This in itself raises the question of what exactly was 'revived'. Without a sufficient grasp of mother-tongues there was no way in which later-generation white ethnics could revert in any meaningful sense to the customs of their immigrant forebears since the linguistic contexts within which they had been practised had effectively been lost en route. The prospect of a meaningful return to ethnicity was thus critically hindered by the widespread loss of the native languages within which ethnic traditions were grounded. White ethnics that were asserting newfound ethnic identities were certainly consuming the idea of ethnicity, but not necessarily the content. Moreover, this consumption was as good as open to all since the language through which it was embraced and expressed was largely the majority language. As a result of language loss, then, the ethnic expressions that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s were decidedly Anglicised, Americanised and unlikely to have resembled to a considerable degree the language-based activities of the immigrant generation.

### 5.3 Upward Mobility

By the 1960s and 1970s, white ethnics had come a long way from the poor huddled masses that had disembarked at Ellis Island just a few decades earlier. Initially dwelling in districts with others of similar background, the majority of new immigrants from

southern and eastern Europe found work in the manufacturing sectors that were in continuous need of manpower for advancing industrialisation. As their status within the working classes fortified, so did the areas within which they lived resulting in the growth of ethnic enclaves characterised by informal segregation and labour-market niches. For the residents of these ethnic enclaves ethnic origin and working class status became intertwined and mutually reinforcing, since each was often manifestly peopled by those of common or similar origin that were typically on the same rung on the socioeconomic ladder as their neighbours. White ethnics were at this time by definition working class, and their distinctly ethnic localities exemplified Horace Kallen's notion of cultural pluralism.

However, this correlation between being of southern and eastern European descent and working class came to be significantly undermined in the post-war period. In contrast to fears that the United States would lapse into another great depression in the aftermath of the war, the economy in fact boomed. The constraints that had been in place during the war-years had now lifted, and an explosion in consumerism fuelled extensive economic growth. The result was the rapid expansion of both the service sector and white collar jobs, and those returning from the war profited substantially from the G.I. Bill (1944) which provided funding for retraining and higher education, to help set up small businesses, and acquire subsidised residential mortgages. The resulting housing boom was matched by growth in the automobile industry, civil aviation, and other sectors responsible for the provision of consumer goods and services that were now in high demand.

White ethnics were certainly not left out of the post-war economic boom, and it did in fact have a far-reaching impact on their socio-economic status. Increasing numbers began rising from blue collar jobs to white collar and service sector jobs, and record numbers of the second- and third-generations were completing high school and continuing on to college. Alba (1990) highlights that the educational achievements of older-stock whites was initially 50 percent higher than that of white ethnics but that a convergence appears among those born in the 1930s and early 1940s that completed their education in the

post-war period. Among those white ethnics born after the war no disparity exists between their levels of education and that of older-stock whites. This convergence occurred for both ethnic men and women, thus indicating that perceptions relating to the traditional role of women among many white ethnic groups were steadily on the decline as white ethnic women were also increasingly entering the workforce and pursuing higher education. The upward mobility experienced by white ethnics meant that they were increasingly becoming less distinct both educationally and occupationally. Whereas once being ethnic was synonymous with being working class, this boundary had become progressively hazy.

By the 1960s and 1970s, then, white ethnics had begun to establish a secure place in the American middle classes. Those whose parents and grandparents had held down jobs in factories, in construction, and in various other unskilled sectors were now emerging as doctors, lawyers, academics, entrepreneurs, and in choice professions associated primarily with the middle classes. The upward mobility of white ethnics was astounding enough for Greeley (1976) to refer to their seemingly rapid ascent as ‘the ethnic miracle’.

Prejudice toward those of southern and eastern European descent had also progressively declined. The fight against Nazi fascism had highlighted the dangers of intolerance and the boundary between whites and white ethnics was in all probability among the first to fade. Upward mobility had also played a vital role in contributing to declining levels of prejudice and Gans underlines that “Many of the European immigrants of the 1880-1925 period looked ‘swarthy’ to the WASPs and the earlier northern European immigrants, but their skin colour seemed to lighten as they moved up in the economy” (1992: 185). Similarly, the election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency in 1960 proved that not being Protestant need no longer inhibit ambition. If a Catholic could make it to the highest office in the land then white ethnics could justifiably afford to aim high.

One of the key figures to embody the ‘ethnic miracle’ was undoubtedly Spiro Agnew. Born Spiros Anagnostopoulos, the son of a Greek-immigrant restaurateur, Agnew enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Second World War. Upon his return he read

law at college and duly joined the legal profession. Agnew became a politically active Republican in the 1950s before deciding to enter the political arena himself toward the end of the decade. In 1966, Agnew was elected Governor of Maryland and two years later was chosen by Richard Nixon to be his running mate in the 1968 presidential campaign. Nixon won, making Agnew the first southern European white ethnic to attain high office.

Agnew's ascent was momentous, irrespective of the nature of his eventual demise. Certainly the mere fact that the second-generation son of a southern European immigrant could make it to the nation's second highest office was remarkable in itself. Whether he would have achieved such success under the name of Anagnostopoulos is admittedly a different matter, but it was his father that had changed the family name to Agnew following his arrival in the United States. The very nomination of Agnew, who on his paternal side was just one generation away from foreignness, as the Republican Party's Vice-Presidential runner confirmed the parity that white ethnics had achieved. In some respects Agnew's political ascent epitomised white ethnic entry into the middle classes, since Middle America is typically the key demographic that presidential campaigns pander to. The improved socio-economic status of many white ethnics had effectively negated the relevance of their comparatively recent arrival, and this in itself made evident the substantial white ethnic presence in the middle classes and their incorporation into the American mainstream. Agnew's ethnic background was not, after all, considered to be a factor that would repel the typical Republican voter. Compared to their immigrant forebears, then, by the 1960s and 1970s Americans of southern and eastern European descent had become unquestionably white. The Nixon-Agnew alliance attested to the fact that white ethnics were now on a par with their Anglo-American cohorts, and socially and politically absorbed into the mainstream.

### 5.3.1 Suburbanization

The increase in upward mobility also triggered an exodus to the suburbs. The post-war growth of the U.S. economy that had lifted the socio-economic status of numerous white



ethnics had also led to an overall increase in demand for quality affordable housing. The result was the proliferation of vast suburban developments in the outlying areas of most major cities to which those that could afford to now flocked. Perhaps key to this development was the increased availability and affordability of the motorcar, which unravelled the close relationship between workplace and residence that had previously typified urban areas (Yancey et al, 1976). The new suburbs were essentially created principally for the automobile-owning class, and the accompanying new roads that connected the suburbs to commercial districts enabled countless Americans to buy homes further away from their places of work. The expansion of bus and streetcar networks also enabled many in the working classes that had experienced some degree of upward mobility to similarly move out of the central urban districts. Thus, by the 1960s and 1970s, the 'American Dream' embodied consumerism, social mobility, and the suburban lifestyle. The suburbs had effectively become symbolic of 'the good life'.

However, suburban America also came to epitomise 'white flight' from inner-city residential areas. The post-war period had witnessed an influx of southern blacks to northern metropolitan areas, the result of which was the intensification of competition for urban housing. The increasing numbers of blacks in the inner-cities and the potential for black neighbourhoods to encroach upon established white ethnic communities, hand in hand with the expectation and prospect of an increase in crime and depreciation in housing prices, persuaded many white ethnics to depart for the suburbs which were both socially and economically out of reach for blacks. By the 1960s and 1970s there had also been a new surge in immigration. Between 1951 and 1960, a quarter of the 2.5 million immigrants permitted to enter the United States arrived from Latin America, and in the period 1961-1979, in conjunction with the relaxation of immigration quotas, Latin Americans and Asians collectively accounted for 65 percent of the 7.3 million immigrants that arrived on American shores (O'McKee, 1985). Like the white ethnic immigrant groups before them, the newer immigrants typically settled around industrial and commercial hubs where employment was more readily available and correspondingly sought accommodation in central urban districts. Thus, the departure of countless white ethnics from the cities to suburban neighbourhoods may have been in part been racially-

motivated as well as income-related. With the increased black presence and the rising tide of new immigrants, the ethnic boundary between whites and white ethnics was eroded even further. Residentially, the priority was to preserve the boundaries of white neighbourhoods and white ethnics were undoubtedly, given the options, the lesser of two evils. It was the whiteness of white ethnics that mattered most.

The growing white ethnic middle class and the improved status of white ethnics as the more-preferred minority-neighbour thus contributed to increasing numbers departing the ethnic enclaves for comparatively non-ethnic suburbia. This white ethnic flight from the historic, ethnically-based urban communities undoubtedly had a categorical effect upon both the structural and cultural integrity of white ethnic groups. Indeed, the intertwining of ethnicity and working class status had underpinned the sense of community within the ethnic enclave. Ethnic urban villages had typically been discernible via the names of businesses within the vicinity, the character of goods- and service-providers catering specifically to the ethnic group's wants and needs, the outward appearance of residences that were often manifestly adorned with ethnic bric-a-brac, and the pervasiveness of the group's native language in homes and on the streets. All in all, such factors had contributed significantly to preserving the ethnic life of the community. The significance of the ethnic enclave to group cohesion is underlined by Alba (1990) as he states that:

The impact of an ethnic neighbourhood on its residents does not end with its explicitly ethnic features. In such a neighbourhood, any social structure that draws primarily on community residents is also ethnic to a degree. Institutions such as schools and churches tend to be disproportionately ethnic, if not homogenous, as do sports teams, youth clubs, and other local groups. While this ethnic composition can be seen as incidental, it may not be without effect, since the solidarity predicated on common membership in an organisation is fused inextricably with consciousness of shared ethnicity.

(1990: 254-55)

The prevalence of a particular ethnic group within a distinctive locality thus intensified the sense of ethnic community and belonging based on high levels of interaction among

its residents on numerous levels—socially, educationally, commercially, and spiritually. Primary associations had commonly been limited to those within the enclave and newly-weds, if striking out on their own, rarely moved very far from the family home. This vital link between ethnic group cohesion and life within the ethnic enclave is further highlighted by Yancey et al (1976):

People are more or less dependent on their community at various stages of the life cycle; for example, when looking for a job, when a child is born, when a wife goes to work and needs babysitters, when a person becomes old and needs care. These and other day-to-day needs may be served by neighbours, friends or institutions. When these are of the same ethnicity, the likelihood of ethnic behaviour and identification with ethnic origins should be greater.

(1976: 400)

The move to the suburbs by many upwardly mobile white ethnics thus considerably impacted upon the structural cohesion of ethnic groups that had formerly been concentrated within a specific locality. In stark contrast to the ethnic structure of the urban villages, life in suburbia was typically characterised by a markedly different social setting. Unlike the ethnic enclaves with their high population densities and ethnic concentrations, the suburbs exemplified communal dispersion and ethnic heterogeneity. The prevalence of cars—a standard of the suburban lifestyle—meant that householders could commute further distances to work. The freedom granted by the automobile also opened up both goods and services which within the ethnic enclave had commonly been provided in-house, and ‘mom and pop’ stores began losing out to out-of-town retail units and shopping malls. Social interaction in suburbia typically did not come close to that within the ethnic enclave, and suburbanites often had to travel further afield in order to socialise with friends and family. Garden fences functioned as boundaries of privacy and children were often reliant upon parents for transportation since low-population densities and widespread car-usage negated the profitability of providing mass transit to these suburban developments. In short, the suburban life, as good as it may have been, was not in any way comparable to the institutional, industrial, and communal cohesion that epitomised the ethnic enclave.

That is not to say that the dispersal of white ethnics to the suburbs by itself destroyed white ethnic group-cohesion. Ethnic activities could be sustained in the lives of white ethnic suburbanites via institutions and organisations, and the cultural life of the ethnic group could persist via family and friendship networks. But it is clear that the fundamental link between ethnicity and community had been, if not severed, positively weakened. Ethnic activities and interactions, once a feature of everyday life, now required conscious efforts to maintain. The ethnic social club and the ethnic church, or other third places that were once a short walk away, were now a significant journey away.

Suburbanization also undoubtedly played a role in reducing the salience of social boundaries between ethnic groups, and suburbanization can be argued to have unleashed a two-pronged attack on ethnicity. Firstly, the greater physical distance between individuals and the highly institutionally- and culturally-concentrated ethnic enclave meant that overall exposure to ethnic affairs was diminished. The suburban lifestyle not only physically detached white ethnics from the old ethnic neighbourhoods, but also meant that their offspring would not be socialised within the ethnic community. Secondly, the ethnic heterogeneity of the suburbs, marked by the co-existence and interaction of householders of varying European descent within the same residential locality, exposed residents to more heterogeneous social networks, institutions and markets that had previously been predominantly ethnic. The ethnic mix of suburban life certainly embodied Zangwill's melting pot metaphor since it undoubtedly compromised the ethnic boundaries between groups which had been more easily sustained from within ethnic enclaves.

White ethnic upward mobility and the subsequent move to the suburbs also had to have impacted upon the very structure of the ethnic group itself. This is, of course, a question of class differentiation. When white ethnics were all by definition working class and typically resided in neighbourhoods with others of common background, the solidarity of the ethnic group was fortified by the interlacing of three common factors: ethnic origin, socio-economic status, and residence. As a result of upward mobility and

suburbanization, two of these three common factors were eliminated and with it some of the group's binding force. Thus, a demarcation emerged between middle-class suburban ethnics and working-class urban ethnics. In spite of common ethnic background, the lifestyle, aims, objectives and concerns of the two socio-economic subdivisions within the ethnic group were no longer the same. Suburban Middle America was a world away from the ethnic ghetto, to which upwardly mobile middle-class ethnics were now increasingly becoming distant and occasional visitors. For middle-class suburbanites the melting pot was in process; for those remaining within the ethnic enclave, pluralism remained a comparatively more evident reality.

The upward mobility enjoyed by white ethnics in the post-war period was therefore a key contributing factor to suburban flight. In all likelihood it can be safely presumed that the vast majority of those that could almost certainly did. The residential integration that occurred as a result furthered the assimilation process to include that pertaining to the social as well as the economic. What this highlights is the weakening of the relationship between ethnicity and working class status which had once been synonymous. Within the ethnic enclave, ethnicity and social class had been mutually reinforcing—the prejudice faced by white ethnics was considered to be because they were *both ethnic and poor*. Thus, ethnicity served as a potent defence against prejudice, despite it being a primary cause of it. With increasing upward mobility and residential integration, in conjunction with declining levels of prejudice, ethnicity was no longer required as a buffer against prejudice for middle-class suburban ethnics. In this respect, its very *raison d'être* had been eliminated. It was no longer a primary source of prejudice, since prejudice itself had declined, and it was therefore less needed as a buffer against it. To all intents and purposes then, within the middle-class suburban America of the 1960s and 1970s, ethnicity had already lost its role as an organising and structuring force in white ethnic America.

#### 5.4 Intermarriage

Intermarriage is arguably the most influential factor affecting ethnic continuity since it can profoundly impact upon the three factors already addressed: it can affect the generational transmission of ethnicity; it can more rapidly facilitate language-shift; and it can, under circumstances where ethnicity and social class are synonymous, provide a shortcut to upward mobility.

Intermarriage has always enjoyed a central place at the very core of assimilation theory. Zangwill endorsed it through his parable, culminating with the intermarriage of his two main characters. To Park, it signified the final outcome of his 'race relations cycle'. Similarly, Gordon foresaw that intermarriage would become commonplace following the achievement of structural assimilation. Marriages across European national-origin boundaries had, of course, been commonplace throughout American history. As far back as 1782, a French immigrant and writer by the name of Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur observed this fact and wrote that:

What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations.... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labour and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.

(cited in Sollors, 1986: 75-76)

Perhaps the most pertinent aspect of Crèvecoeur's statement, which Gleason contends "has probably been quoted more than any other in the history of immigration" (1981:33), is not simply his observation that intermarriage between those of north-western European origin was pervasive but also that, at least to him, this very fact lent itself to the creation of a distinct American people. Hence, as far back as the eighteenth century one can find emergent ideas regarding the significance of intermarriage to perceptions of the

archetypal American.

The arrival of large numbers of southern and eastern Europeans in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries added a somewhat new ingredient to the Euro-American melting pot. Although permitted to enter the United States as free whites, the new immigrants were undoubtedly considered racial outsiders and encountered considerable social prejudice. The official stance toward the new immigrants with respect to intermarriage is highlighted by the 1922 case of *Rollins v. Alabama* (see Chapter 2). As a result, in-marriage rates would have been high among first-generation immigrants and at a significant level among their second-generation offspring. Prejudice toward the new immigrants would have undoubtedly engendered both internally- and externally-imposed social constraints aimed at deterring intermarriage.

The first landmark, and widely cited, study of intermarriage is that of Ruby Jo Kennedy's investigations into intermarriage rates in New Haven, Connecticut, in the 1940s. Kennedy found that although in-marriage levels had remained relatively high over the seven decades of which her study spanned, they had experienced something of a decline from 91.20 percent in 1870 to 65.80 percent in 1930 and to 63.64 percent in 1940 (Gordon, 1964: 122). However, although inter-ethnic marriages had increased by a third since 1870, Kennedy found that marriages between those of common faith remained high—79.82 percent of Protestants, 83.71 percent of Catholics, and 94.32 percent of Jews had married someone of the same religious background irrespective of national origins (Gordon, 1964: 123). Kennedy subsequently utilised her data to argue that intermarriage was not taking place indiscriminately as predicted by melting pot theorists and that the apparent decline in the importance placed on ethnic background had not led to a decline in marriages within religious boundaries. Kennedy thus argued that intermarriage in the United States did not embody a single melting pot but, rather, reflected a 'triple melting pot' within which faith was the decisive factor.

However, although her claim that ethnic differences among those of common faith did not appear to deter intermarriage was widely accepted by the academic community of the

time, later reanalyses of Kennedy's data raise doubts regarding her findings and pose questions as to whether marriages that traversed ethnic boundaries but not religious ones were less indicative of conscious preferences and more closely related to the residential patterns that characterised New Haven at the time of her study (Hirschman, 1983). It is entirely conceivable that the high rates of religious endogamy that Kennedy uncovered may have had more to do, for instance, with the fact that if Catholics live among other Catholics, they are conceivably more likely to marry Catholics.

Irrespective of the various barriers against intermarriage that may have been in place during much of the first half of the twentieth century, the post-war period came to embody a very different story. Approximate figures on intermarriage rates since 1950 suggest that 80 percent of Italian Americans, three-quarters of those of Polish descent, and half of American Jews have all married outside of their communities of descent (Hall and Lindholm, 1999). Indeed, Gordon (1972) noted that:

The attitudes of American young people, particularly those who are college and university students, has markedly changed with respect to intermarriage. The social controls of parents, family and organised religion that exerted influence upon our youth prior to World War II have lessened in influence and importance.

(1972: 7-8)

In the post-war period, and particularly by the 1960s and 1970s, the institutional controls and edicts—whether familial, religious, or societal—that had previously enjoyed comparative success in discouraging marriages between those of differing ethnic backgrounds had undoubtedly begun to fade.

A number of factors can be accredited with having contributed to the post-war rise in marriages across ethnic boundaries. First and foremost is undoubtedly the relative size of the white ethnic groups. In the main, the larger the minority community is the lower the rate of intermarriage. Similarly, when the minority community is small intermarriage is



more common, particularly if the community in question is characterised by an unbalanced sex ratio. In such cases, groups with disproportionately higher numbers of one sex will be subjected to high rates of out-marriage by the surplus members of the more numerous sex. This question of numbers is one that communities of southern and eastern European descent were unquestionably faced with toward the mid-twentieth century. The immigration hiatus that came into effect in the 1920s had effectively halted the arrival of new immigrants from their respective countries of origin. Hence, having discounted those ineligible for marriage, from the period commencing in the 1920s until immigration rules were relaxed in the 1960s the ethnic cohorts of marrying age would have been faced with very limited pools of potential mates with whom they shared a common ethnic background. Those white ethnics that were faced with the prospect of marrying beyond their respective ethnic group boundaries may have initially restricted themselves, as Kennedy suggested, to those of the same religious background or, in the very least, to a fellow white ethnic due to nativist hostility. But it was only a matter of time, and perhaps also a question of numbers, before white ethnics began flouting both religious and ethnic boundaries.

The effective suspension of immigration from southern and eastern Europe, as well as the events of the Second World War, significantly contributed to an overall decline in the importance placed on ethnic distinctions with respect to intermarriage. The halt to further immigration effectively cut ethnic groups off from their sources of replenishment which in turn led to the relatively uncontested Americanization of an entire generation. In the absence of the prospect of hordes of immigrants continually arriving on American shores, mainstream attitudes toward pre-existing ethnic communities became more relaxed and accepting. The horrors of the Second World War had brought to light the need for greater tolerance toward others of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds, and many a parent would have been left with little to respond with should their stressing of ethnic purity have been met by a reference to the ideology of the Third Reich. From the end of the war, then, intermarriage had gradually become more acceptable and by this time, according to Barron:

For many young Americans the cultural relativity with which they are indoctrinated in the public school system and the psychological association which they develop between the intermarriage taboo and “backwardness” are also conceivably significant in this context.

(1972: 101)

Barron also argues that by this time American culture had become embedded with a “romantic complex” which entrenched the notion that ‘true love knows no boundaries’ in the popular imagination. Whether this in itself led to an increase in intermarriage or whether the notion emerged later in order to account for widespread intermarriage is admittedly open to question. In any case, the emergent idea was that choice of spouse was an individual decision that should neither be inhibited by ethnic differences nor subjected to institutional constraints.

Another cause for intermarriage that cannot be ignored is that of the positive desire to essentially escape from within the boundaries of, and perhaps from the social stigma perceived to be attached to, white ethnic groups. This may have surfaced as a form of rebellion against the family or against the established norms of the respective ethnic community within which the intermarried had been raised. Those to whom ethnic group life was too stifling or too blinkered would far less likely have sought a partner that would only serve to reinforce his or her ties to the group. Among those belonging to the second generation, intermarriage may have embodied an expression of ethnic self-hatred as a result of marginalisation. Rebellion can result in a simple desire to marry outside of the ethnic group; ethnic self-hatred, however, can result in marriage to someone perceived to be of higher-status. For some white ethnics at least, marrying a native-born Protestant—a 100-percent-American—may have been appealing as a means of ‘marrying up’.

All of these factors, however, overlook the likelihood that widespread intermarriage in the immediate post-war period was the result of comprehensive assimilation, which had led to the diminution of endogamous feelings. Upward mobility, residential

desegregation, and the increased climate of tolerance meant that dependence upon the ethnic group for the provision of goods and services as well as to buttress self-esteem had become increasingly redundant. As ethnic distinctions between whites became less important, the values and traditions of the ethnic group accordingly became immaterial. The increase in marriages across ethnic lines can thus be said to signify comprehensive socio-economic integration:

If children of different ethnic backgrounds belong to the same play-group, later the same adolescent cliques, and at college the same fraternities and sororities; if the parents belong to the same country club and invite each other to their homes for dinner; it is completely unrealistic not to expect these children, now grown, to love and to marry each other, blithely oblivious to previous ethnic extraction.

(Gordon, 1964: 80)

The high rates of intermarriage that characterised white ethnics from 1950 onward can therefore be utilised to argue that by this stage ethnic background was simply no longer taken into account regarding questions of marriage. Ethnic descent, among countless white ethnics, had become immaterial.

Having considered the possible causes of intermarriage, however, it is necessary to similarly deliberate its consequences. In general, even should a party to intermarriage have a strong attachment to his or her group and marries outside of the group for reasons other than that of weak endogamous feelings, it is presumed with good reason that his or her attachment to the group will weaken over time. This line of reasoning rests upon the supposition that one or both parties to intermarriage is likely to relinquish a religious or territorial attachment, and is more likely to abandon certain languages, secular ethnic organisations and friendship networks (Hammond and Warner, 1993; Waters, 1990). Of course, this need not always be the case, particularly if both parties are highly assimilated to the mainstream culture, but the extent of ethnic involvement cannot realistically be maintained at a similar level to that within endogamous marriages. This is a point that Alba (1990) underlines as he states that:

Because of differences in ethnic and cultural background, it is reasoned, partners in an intermarriage may find it necessary to submerge their ethnic identities, lest these give rise to conflict. For a similar reason, they may find it difficult to maintain ethnic cultural traits—language, customs, and perhaps cuisine as well...Adoption of mainstream American culture is made likely because it is a common denominator, a cultural *lingua franca*.

(1990: 180, original italics)

Hence, with respect to ethnic continuity, even if the decision to marry someone of a different ethnic background is significant in itself since it symbolises, for whatever reason, a step away from it, it is the long-term ramifications of intermarriage upon the ethnic attachments of the intermarried that is undoubtedly key. Evidence suggests that ethnic attachments are customarily weakened by intermarriage and, if anything, intermarriage leads to greater heterogeneity with respect to extended families and social networks (Waters, 1990). Intermarriage in itself thus fundamentally leans toward ethnic discontinuity.

This trend unsurprisingly finds expression in the offspring of intermarriages, based on the fundamental role of the family as the primary socialising agent. As the principal conduits of cultural transmission, parents and guardians are by and large uncontested in their roles as the foremost agents overseeing early childhood socialisation. Rex (1997) goes as far as to claim that every child is subject to an ‘infantile ethnic trap’ as a result of being “brought up within a kin network in which names and categorised individuals play specific roles, and in relation to whom it has clearly defined rights and duties” (1997: 271). Should this be accepted as true, the ethnic groundings of this ‘trap’ are significantly more complex for those whose parents are of different ethnic backgrounds. To recall Alba (1990):

Mixed ancestry cuts to the very quick of ethnicity as a social phenomenon, for ancestry is inextricably bound up with perceptions of ethnic group membership. Individuals with mixed ancestry have the potential to belong to two or more

groups, and this fact may undercut the strength of affiliation they feel for any of them. In addition, such individuals are, for obvious reasons, more likely to be brought up within an ethnically mixed milieu and therefore less likely to be socialised within an ethnic culture.

(1990: 15)

It is thus reasonable to assume that ethnic socialisation simply cannot be as far-reaching among the offspring of intermarriages in comparison to those whose parents are of common ethnic background. Moreover, should the intermarried stress the importance of American culture as the common denominator and as a compromise between two different ethnic backgrounds, it is more than likely that their offspring will be primarily socialised within a more generic American setting. Hence, those of mixed descent that are raised within an ethnically mixed household are less likely to possess strong attachments to an ethnic group or to an ethnic background in comparison to those that are raised within an unmixed family setting.

The broader significance of intermarriage ultimately lies in the degree to which it impacts upon ethnic boundaries. The act of intermarriage itself signifies a breach of the ethnic boundary, and those of mixed descent are tangible evidence of it. Spickard (1989) has rightly argued that “For two groups of people to intermarry substantially they must perceive each other as similar and attractive. But that does not mean they see each other as *the same*...only that they see each other as compatible (1989: 17, original italics). Spickard is certainly correct, but his perspective is valid only at the point of marriage and does not take into account its long-term effects. The key effect is undoubtedly that of a reduction in the salience of ethnic boundaries between the two respective groups, akin perhaps to that aforementioned between the Italian and Irish communities in Pittsburgh that attended mass together.

What is abundantly clear is that the more out-marriage that takes place among members of a given ethnic group, the less coherent the ethnicity of that group is likely to become. This reduction in coherency is not only due to the likely diminution of its numbers, but

also because of the weakening of boundaries between groups. In effect there exists a vicious circle: a reduction in the salience of ethnic boundaries between two or more groups encourages intermarriage; and the act of intermarriage itself subsequently leads to a weakening of ethnic boundary salience. This is because, within a context in which ethnicity is considered significant, the marriage signifies more than just the union of two individuals but also the merging of two groups. As a result, as individuals are joined in equal partnership, the marriage also symbolises equality between the two respective ethnic groups:

Intermarriage tests, and also perforates, ethnic social boundaries. It depends on the willingness of people from different ethnic backgrounds to accept each other in a long-lasting, exclusive, and largely non-hierarchical relationship. It also forges not just one relation spanning ethnic boundaries, but a host of them, creating new kinship relations between the relatives of the intermarrying couple.

(Alba, 1990: 167)

The perforation of boundaries inevitably compels a reduction in ethnocentrism. In effect, ethnic boundaries represent ethnocentric borders and intermarriage is thus tantamount to defection, and undoubtedly affects the respective group's self-conception. Stated another way, should there be an ethnic boundary between a defined "us" and a defined "them," that boundary cannot be sustained if those belonging to "us" are frequently uniting with "them" and giving birth to young who are *both* "us" *and* "them." Without ethnocentrism, then, and the ethnic boundaries which it props up, ethnicity has little hope of long-term survival in the face of rising intermarriage.

Ethnic and religious institutions are perhaps an ideal example of such effects. With increasing rates of intermarriage, ethnic organisations and associations have been compelled to become more heterogeneous in order to retain the membership of the intermarried. Religious institutions have similarly been compelled to conduct marriage ceremonies between those of differing religious backgrounds in the hope of retaining some degree of spiritual affiliation. The more frequently these boundaries are traversed

the less significant they become, and the less distinct the content within them correspondingly becomes.

With all of this in mind, one need only consider the facts. According to the 1980 census, approximately 75 percent of all marriages involving whites involved some degree of ethnic boundary crossing, leaving only a quarter of marriages between those of the same ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, 47 percent had ethnically mixed ancestry, rising from less than a third in the cohort born in 1920 or earlier, to 60 percent among those born in the 1960s, and rising further to two-thirds among those born in the 1970s. Hence, a more than significant proportion of later-generation white ethnics that were so vociferous in asserting their newfound ethnic pride in the 1960s and 1970s were either intermarried, were the offspring of those intermarried, or would sooner or later intermarry themselves. It is for this reason that Alba states that:

Among whites, a long-term trend of increasing intermarriage, which dates at least to the immediate post-World War II period and probably earlier, has made marriage across ethnic lines now the rule rather than the exception. Indeed, ethnic origins seem so weakly related to marriages among whites that the term *intermarriage* may be increasingly a misnomer...

(1990: 12, original italics)

The increased prevalence of inter-ethnic marriage in conjunction with the generational distance from the point of immigration that typified those vociferously asserting ethnic identities, the loss of mother tongues, and upward mobility and the flight to the suburbs that it had entailed, categorically assaulted the structural integrity of white ethnic groups. By the 1960s and 1970s, white ethnics were certainly more ‘white’ than they were ‘ethnic’, and this undoubtedly hindered the prospect of reviving in any meaningful sense the ethnic traditions of immigrant forebears. In 1963, Nathan Glazer may have somewhat ambitiously proposed, in conjunction with Daniel P. Moynihan, that the melting pot did not happen and that ethnicity was not only going strong but was also undergoing a revival, but thirty years later even he had to face up to the fact that “assimilation had gone too far” (1993: 134). Considering the factors examined in this chapter, the white ethnic

fervour of the 1960s and 1970s was arguably doomed from the outset.



## Chapter 6 - White Ethnicities in Post-Civil Rights America

In light of the decline of the objective and structural aspects of white ethnicities in the pre-civil rights period as examined in the previous chapter, the question arises as to what exactly came about as a result of the white ethnic upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s. One outcome was that such terms as ‘assimilation’ and ‘Americanization’ became a faux pas, in addition to the metaphoric collapse of the melting pot symbol. In place of such terms that had undoubtedly typified much of the socio-economic progress that white ethnics had achieved since their arrival at the turn of the century, emerged a growing popularity of notions of cultural pluralism, trans-nationality, and ethnic diaspora.

### 6.1 The ‘New’ Ethnicity

Having previously brought to light his defence of white ethnics in Chapter 4, particularly vis-à-vis blacks, it should come as little surprise that Novak is one of the foremost critics of both Americanization and the melting pot metaphor. In fact, Novak considers assimilation to have epitomised nothing short of a “process of vast psychic repression” (1996: 405), and regards the term ‘Americanization’ as merely a code-word for indoctrination into the WASP-dominated superculture. During the era of Americanization campaigns as well as during the height of melting pot popularity which preceded the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, Novak claims that southern and eastern European Americans such as himself had been drilled to consider themselves only as ‘American’, and to neither identify in any way as ‘ethnic’ nor to be hyphenated to any supplementary national-origin identities. As a result, not only had ethnicity come to be forcibly suppressed by those subjected to Americanization but in itself came to symbolise a “dirty secret” to be swept under the carpet or tucked away in a drawer only to be spoken of furtively and, even then, with caution. White ethnics had been “catechized, cajoled, and condescended to by guardians of good Anglo-Protestant attitudes” (1996: 74) and as a result:

...for many years withered into silence about their identity. Many suppressed the

instincts of their flesh, the impulses of their sensibilities, and perhaps even the signals from their genes. (Teachers made Italian boys sit on their hands all morning long, to make them stop gesticulating.) A great many try desperately to *be all alike*, to look the way Americans do in the magazines, and movies and streets: to make it, to pass.

(1996: 93, original italics)

However, such attempts by the Anglo-American establishment to Americanize white ethnics had, in Novak's view, been futile. Moreover, the rational choice that many white ethnics had been faced with under the pretext of Americanization and of the melting pot vision of American society—to forgo ethnicity for the perceived advantages of life in the mainstream—had equally been a fraud. Regardless of the extent to which white ethnics conformed to and emulated Anglo-American ideals, when push came to shove they continued to be regarded as “ethnics” by the powers that be—as less than equals. Novak claims that later-generation white ethnics were caught in a limbo, appreciably detached from the traditions of their immigrant forebears and yet neither fully accepted nor fully at home in the mainstream. To Novak, then, American society had never been a melting pot, a view that in some respects echoed Glazer's and Moynihan's assertion almost a decade earlier that the melting pot, at least in New York, had not materialised.

Moreover, the culture that had replaced forsaken ethnic traditions, and that which had supplanted the ethnic group structure in the lives of white ethnics, was equally despicable. The American ‘superculture’, which Novak claims had diverged as much from Anglo-American traditions as from those of any other ethnic group, had created something of a cultural vacuum in American life. Furthermore, this superculture, which can only be presumed to be a reference to the mass culture which had surfaced following the suburbanisation, homogenisation, and increasing commercialisation of American life in the postwar period, was not an effective substitute for the ethnic cultures of yesteryear. The superculture had neither foundation nor direction except, perhaps, in materialism and toward hedonism:

...Americans have suffered historical amnesia; consciously, at least, they are

rootless, without cultural memory, loyal to no tradition or project; their purpose in life, so far as they know, is to please themselves. Still others (especially the highly educated members of superculture) have been diligently taught that ethnicity is the source of evil and so they should be as universalist as possible...

(1996: xli)

The ethnic upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s was thus welcomed by Novak with considerable glee. In fact, to him, the increased ethnic activism during this period gave birth to what he dubs the 'new ethnicity', which embodied a "movement of self-knowledge on the part of members of the third and fourth generation of Southern and Eastern European descent" (1996: 346). The key questions embodied within this new movement were "Who are you? What history do you come from? And where next?" (1996: xlii), the answers to which would supposedly alleviate the historical amnesia that Novak claims white ethnics had suffered and which would liberate them from the confines of WASPism. White ethnics were now essentially free to be ethnic and as a result:

...millions of Americans, who for a long time tried desperately even if unconsciously to become "Americanized," are delighted to discover that they no longer have to pay that price; are grateful that they were born among the people destiny placed them in; are pleased to discover the possibilities and the limits inherent in being who they are; and are openly happy about what heretofore they had disguised in silence.

(1996: 342)

The social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s had thus led to a search for roots among white ethnics and had instigated voyages of self-discovery, an increase in ethnic consciousness, and a newfound assertiveness that rejected the identities that had been previously assigned to them and which they had been instructed to have.

However, in a similar vein to the questions that Novak claims white ethnics had begun to ask themselves during this period, the question arises as to what exactly this 'new

ethnicity' entailed. It was not an attempt to recreate those aspects of ethnicity which had personified the immigrant generation per se, for Novak maintains that each generation is subjected to differing conditions and thus rarely replicates the ethnic characteristics of past generations. Yet Novak seems to take several steps further and, according him, the new ethnicity did not in fact require:

(a) speaking a foreign language; (b) living in a subculture; (c) living in a "tight-knit" neighbourhood; (d) belonging to fraternal organisations; (e) responding to "ethnic" appeals; (f) exalting one's own nationality or culture, narrowly construed. Neither does it entail a university education or the reading of writers on the new ethnicity.

(1996: 346-47)

Intriguingly, then, the new ethnicity was seemingly divorced entirely from any semblance of group structure, and by proposing this departure Novak appears to dismiss those aspects of ethnicity that had in fact previously functioned as both pillars and as beacons of white ethnic life in America. Having discounted those aspects that have classically been considered the mainstay of ethnic group cohesion, Novak proceeds to outline what the new ethnicity did entail:

...first, a growing sense of discomfort with the sense of identity one is supposed to have—universalist, "melted," "like everyone else"; then a growing appreciation for the potential wisdom of one's own gut reactions (especially on moral matters) and their historical roots; a growing self-confidence and social power; a sense of being discriminated against, condescended to, or carelessly misapprehended; a growing disaffection regarding those to whom one had always been taught to defer; and a sense of injustice regarding the response of liberal spokesmen to conflicts between various ethnic groups, especially between "legitimate" minorities and "illegitimate" ones.

(1996: 347)

Whether he realised it or not at the time of writing, however, it is clear within Novak's

description that the new ethnicity was predominantly *reactionary*. Much of his description undoubtedly corresponds more to a socio-political response to the radical changes that had been taking place in American society during the 1960s as opposed to the embracing of ethnic identities due to the sudden realisation of the valuable traditions of immigrant forebears. The new ethnicity that the events of the 1960s had given birth to thus signifies more a revolt than a ‘return’, and more a vehicle through which to express discontent in other quarters as opposed to irrefutable proof that white ethnics were in fact unmeltable.

However, Novak is himself a third-generation white ethnic and hence his perspective with regard to the upsurge in white ethnic activity and interests, with the benefit of hindsight, is undoubtedly a highly subjective one. Nevertheless, although the tone of much of his writing on the “unmeltable ethnics” exemplifies to a great extent his personal and emotional proximity to the socio-political developments of the 1960s, Novak’s perspective is significant in that it typifies the views of those that claim that a revival of white ethnicities had in actual fact taken place and that it had been both a positive and a highly significant development with regard to the future of white ethnicities in America.

## 6.2 Symbolic Ethnicity

Undoubtedly provoked by the claims of such white ethnic advocates as Novak, the sociologist Herbert J. Gans penned his observations and thoughts in response to claims of an ethnic revival. In fact, in Gans’ view there had not been a revival and the ostensible rise in ethnic sentiment during this period could be attributed to a variety of factors that were not in themselves necessarily indicative of a bona fide return to ethnicity. In any case, Gans’ principal motive for questioning claims of a revival is certainly unambiguous, since acknowledging that a revival had taken place would consequentially undermine the validity of what had been the dominant theory of the time—straight-line assimilation. At the time of his writing, Gans was very much an adherent of the theory, although he does concede that the straight line “has never been quite straight” (1979: 17). Thus, the seeming rise in white ethnic assertiveness during the 1960s and 1970s did not in itself

prove to him that the progress of straight line assimilation had been brought to a halt. His 1979 paper entitled 'Symbolic ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups and cultures in America', then, was as much a critique of the 'new ethnicity' as it was a categorical defence of straight-line assimilation theory.

Gans' first contention is that what appeared to many to be an ethnic revival was simply due to the increased *visibility* of white ethnics and ethnic issues during this period. This increased visibility itself stemmed from two primary sources—an increase in working-class ethnic political activity, and the upward mobility of countless white ethnics who had now secured a place in the American middle classes. Given his position with regard to straight-line assimilation, it should come as little surprise that Gans considers ethnicity itself to be a characteristic of the working class. This is, of course, something of a given since according to straight-line theory the achievement of upward mobility inevitably leads to the diminution of ethnic attachments. Thus, in reference to the surge in ethnic activity in the 1960s and 1970s, Gans states that:

...much of the contemporary behaviour described as ethnic strikes me as working class behaviour, which differs only slightly among various ethnic groups, and then largely because of variations in the structure of opportunity open to people in America, and in the peasant traditions their ancestors brought over from the old country, which were themselves responses to European opportunity structures. In other words, ethnicity is largely a working-class style.

(1979: 3)

For those white ethnics that had not achieved upward mobility and had continued to reside in predominantly ethnic neighbourhoods, to work among fellow ethnics, and to vote for ethnic politicians, the organising structure of ethnic group life had never really disappeared. As a result, there could not have been an ethnic revival from working-class white ethnic quarters since there was no need to revive that which was, so to speak, already alive and well. Nevertheless, working-class white ethnics had become more visible during the 1960s and 1970s primarily due to their increased political involvement in response to black militancy and government policies perceived to undermine their

interests in favour of blacks. As white ethnics became increasingly involved in a political arena already dominated by the civil rights and anti-war movements and began to mimic their strategies, Gans argues that white ethnic political activity caught the interest of the mass media which subsequently drew nationwide attention to white ethnic themes and concerns. Thus, although it appeared as if white ethnic issues had suddenly appeared from nowhere, therefore indicative of a revival, it was not the case. Ethnicity had always characterised working-class white ethnic life and during this period had simply become more visible due to the magnification of media interest.

Middle- and upper-middle class white ethnics had also become more visible. As highlighted in the previous chapter, many white ethnics whose parents and grandparents had held down jobs in primarily unskilled employment sectors had, by the 1960s and 1970s, emerged as doctors, lawyers, academics, entertainers, and in a host of other distinctly middle-class professions. These upwardly mobile white ethnics had become more visible since, Gans argues, the national media for the most part reports on the issues and activities of Middle America. This did not necessarily mean that middle-class white ethnics had become, in a manner of speaking, more ethnic or had in any way returned to ethnicity, but their mere presence, and arguably the increased prevalence of white ethnic names in the popular media had made it appear as if a revival was taking place.

Gans identifies two key areas which he argues contributed to the increase in middle-class white ethnic visibility. The first is that of the increasing presence of white ethnics in academia. The post-war period had witnessed significant growth in the number of white ethnics that had continued on to college, which had inevitably led to an increase in the number of white ethnics pursuing academic careers and subsequently climbing up to the higher echelons of academia. This, in turn, had led to an increase in publications on and around ethnic themes. Literature on white ethnic immigrant groups was not, however, a novel concept and the works of writers such as Oscar Handlin and Mary Antin have previously been cited as examples of renowned publications on the subject. But these had previously been through “small and poverty-stricken ethnic publishing houses” (1979: 5) and by the 1960s and 1970s upwardly mobile white ethnics that had pursued academic

careers now had the status, the confidence, and the funding with which to openly and energetically publish material on ethnic themes. In effect, one consequence of the increase in white ethnic academic achievement was that ethnic literature had become mainstream and, therefore, more visible.

The second area is that of the entertainment industry, which is arguably the most visible of all. Although white ethnics had been involved in the industry for some time, many had habitually Anglicized their names in order to cater to primarily non-ethnic audiences. By the 1960s and 1970s, this had changed and entertainers were retaining their ethnic names and, in the case of comedians for example, even explicitly drawing attention to their own ethnic backgrounds and to ethnic themes. Gans even accuses some writers and entertainers of having “re-embraced their ethnicity solely to spur their careers” (1979: 6), but his key argument is that pre-existing ethnic attitudes and behaviours had not really undergone any significant transformation as alluded to by ethnic activists, and had merely become more visible to the public eye.

Regarding later-generation white ethnics that had suddenly embraced white ethnic identities, Gans’ position is very much in accordance with straight-line assimilation as he states that:

For the third generation, the secular ethnic cultures which the immigrants brought with them are now only an ancestral memory, or an exotic tradition to be savoured once in a while in a museum or at an ethnic festival.... The old ethnic cultures serve no useful function for third-generation ethnics who lack direct and indirect ties to the old country, and neither need nor have much knowledge about it.

(1979: 6)

This was undoubtedly due to the achievement of upward mobility as well as generational distance, the consequence of which was that many later-generation white ethnics that had suddenly begun to assert ethnic identities were neither resident in ethnic neighbourhoods nor employed only in industries within which they were surrounded by fellow ethnics. In



effect, upward mobility had dispersed white ethnics to such a degree that in addition to their primary groups becoming more heterogeneous, most had little reason to seek out or maintain ethnic ties in even secondary group activities. Thus, according to Gans, ethnicity had very much become divorced from the practical day-to-day lives of those white ethnics proudly affirming national-origin identities.

Despite this degree of assimilation and Americanization, Gans acknowledges that many third-generation white ethnics were continuing to maintain some semblance of an ethnic identity. These identities were not, however, necessarily rooted in the cultures and ethnic group structures of immigrant forebears but, rather, seemed to be tailor-made to individual taste. Third-generation ethnics, Gans contends, were less concerned with *belonging* to an ethnic group and more interested in seeking ways to furnish their identities in accordance with their own *individual* interpretations of what those ethnic identities should entail. As a result, ethnicity to this generation had become “less of an ascriptive than a voluntary role that people assume alongside other roles” (1979: 8) and involved far more freedom and far fewer restrictions than traditionally associated with an ethnic identity. This was, of course, because most had largely not been raised within ethnic communities and therefore had little experience of the assigned roles typically affixed to ethnic group affiliation. This new emphasis on individual identity rather than group membership, Gans observed, had two crucial effects:

First, given the degree to which the third generation has acculturated and assimilated, most people look for easy and intermittent way of expressing their identity, for ways that do not conflict with other ways of life. As a result, they refrain from ethnic behaviour that requires an arduous or time-consuming commitment, either to a culture that must be practiced constantly, or to organisations that demand active membership. Second, because people’s concern is with identity, rather than with cultural practices or group relationships, they are free to look for ways of expressing that identity which suit them best, thus opening up the possibility of voluntary, diverse or individualistic ethnicity.

(1979: 8-9)

The ‘new’ ethnicity that was being embraced by later-generation white ethnics was thus not one that necessarily involved active membership in ethnic organisations or the practising of ethnic cultures to a degree to which it would have an influence on daily life. It was, rather, more a leisure-time activity expressed in the form of ethnic symbols that had been extracted from the broader ethnic culture yet held to be meaningful representations of it. What Gans suggests, then, is that for the third generation that embodied the supposed revival, ethnicity far from constituted a way of life as it had for their immigrant grandparents. Individuals effectively selected certain aspects of the ethnic traditions and claimed to identify with them—which Gans implies were typically those that required a minimum of time and effort but were nevertheless highly conspicuous. Ethnicity to the third generation simply represented one of countless leisure-time activities that could be practised at convenience. It is this voluntary, convenient, and individualised ethnicity, often involving an attachment to ethnic symbols that required little time and effort, that Gans dubs ‘symbolic ethnicity’.

The symbols that typify this new form of ethnic involvement could be wide and varied, but all had two key attributes in common—they were highly “visible and clear in meaning” and could be “easily expressed and felt, without requiring undue interference in other aspects of life” (1979: 9). One such example is ethnic ceremonies or festivities that come around intermittently or annually and which require a minimum of time and effort yet showcased that one was involved in ethnic matters. In some respects such events can serve simply as an excuse to bring the family together and hence symbolise something more personal to the family in question rather than a link to any wider ethnic collective. Further symbols include the consumption of ethnic foodstuff and the purchasing of ethnic merchandise, as well as an affinity to fellow ethnics that have achieved some degree of publicly-acclaimed success thereby inducing feelings of ethnic pride and solidarity. More commonly, however, symbolic ethnicity involves a nostalgic and somewhat romanticised attachment to the traditions of immigrant forebears and to the nations from which they had arrived. According to Gans:

Old countries are particularly useful as identity symbols because they are far away

and cannot make arduous demands on American ethnics; even sending large amounts of money is ultimately an easy way to help unless the donors are making major economic sacrifices. Moreover, American ethnics can identify with their perception of the old country or homeland, transforming it into a symbol which leaves out its domestic or foreign problems that could become sources of conflict for Americans.

(1979: 10-11)

Identification with ancestral homelands does, however, raise a number of questions. The immigrant forebears of the vast majority of American Jews certainly did not arrive from Israel, yet the state often serves as a potent symbol for the purposes of identification. Similarly, Poland did not exist as a nation-state during the period of high immigration, and Italian immigrants had not arrived in the United States with any real sense of national identity but, rather, with far narrower regional ones. Furthermore, the images and perceptions of the old country in the minds of later-generation ethnics are often frozen in time, remaining as they were at the time of immigration and thus bearing little resemblance to the modern, contemporary cultures of these countries.

Such details are, however, for the most part inconsequential to the maintenance of a symbolic identity since the primary role of ethnic symbols, and in some cases ethnic myths, is simply to contribute to the *feeling* of being ethnic. Therefore, symbolic ethnicity...

...does not need a practiced culture, even if the symbols are borrowed from it. To be sure, symbolic culture is as much culture as practiced culture, but the latter persists only to supply symbols to the former. Indeed, practiced culture may need to persist, for some, because people do not borrow their symbols from extinct cultures that survive only in museums. And insofar as the borrowed materials come from the practiced culture of the immigrant generation, they make it appear as if an ethnic revival were taking place.

(1979: 12)

The use of symbols as expressions of ethnicity by white ethnics thus made it appear as if a revival was taking place because the highly visible character of the symbols embraced were by the same token visible to American society at large. In addition, since the national media principally covers and caters to Middle America, the use of such symbols by the white ethnic members of Middle America inevitably resulted in more media spotlight upon these ethnic symbols.

However, the fact that it was predominantly the third generation that was asserting white ethnic identities during the 1960s and 1970s raised the question of whether this new form of ethnic involvement substantiated Hansen's Law. Gans certainly does not believe so and in fact states that:

Hansen's hypothesis can be questioned on several grounds.... His data, the founding of Swedish and other historical associations in the Midwest, provided slender evidence of a widespread third generation return, particularly among non-academic ethnics. In addition, his theory is static, for Hansen never indicated what would happen in the fourth generation, or what processes were involved in the return that would enable it to survive into the future.

(1979: 4)

Although he does concede that those belonging to the third generation "can obviously attend to the past with less emotional risk" (1979: 11), to Gans there had simply been insufficient research conducted among later-generation suburban white ethnics and thus a lack of empirical evidence to prove that ethnicity had been revived in any notable sense. However, he does somewhat cannily suggest that the increase in interest in Swedish history that Hansen had observed among the third-generation of his time may have simply been a form of symbolic ethnicity, thus adding weight to his own theory. This notwithstanding, to Gans the notion of a third-generation return to ethnicity was unsupported, and that of an 'ethnic revival' merely hearsay.

Yet having charged Hansen with not having stipulated what would occur after the supposed third-generation return, Gans unavoidably draws attention to his own position

regarding the future of ethnicity or, rather, of symbolic ethnicity. It was certainly possible, Gans argues, for symbolic ethnicity to decline as each successive generation becomes further distanced from the immigrant generation and its symbols. Thus, in accordance with straight-line theory, it was conceivable that even the ethnic symbols embraced by third- and fourth-generation ethnics could 'melt' away in the face of continuing acculturation and assimilation. Alternatively, it was equally possible for symbolic ethnicity to stabilise and continue to play a role in the lives of the fifth and sixth generations and even beyond. The persistence of symbolic ethnicity would, however, depend on a number of factors, the most important of which is the social cost attached to maintaining an ethnic identity. At the time of his writing in the late-1970s, Gans did not believe that the maintenance of a white ethnic identity was in any way disadvantageous to those that possessed them. Times had changed, and the societal prejudice that had encouraged many to disassociate from their ethnic heritages in favour of mainstream participation was no longer virulent:

Ethnic behaviour, attitudes, and even identity are...determined not only by what goes on among ethnics, but also by developments in the larger society, and especially by how that society will treat ethnics in the future; what costs it will levy and what benefits it will award to them as ethnics. At present, the costs of being and feeling ethnic are slight. The changes which the immigrants and their descendants wrought in America now make it unnecessary for ethnics to surrender their ethnicity to gain upward mobility...

(1979: 15)

Circumstances could change, but as long as the costs remained negligible white ethnics are essentially free to maintain and express ethnic identities. Ethnicity had, so to speak, become respectable since it was no longer a cause of conflict and thus served as something of a useful, and harmless, means of differentiation in response to perceptions of cultural homogenisation, and one that could be achieved with a minimum of time and effort.

None of the developments of the 1960s and 1970s had persuaded Gans that straight-line

assimilation theory was defunct. Even his concept of symbolic ethnicity, in his view, could be incorporated into the theory since the straight line had never been quite straight. The ethnic upsurge was, then, simply tantamount to a cyclical 'bump' or 'wave' in an otherwise wholly legitimate theory. Despite shying away from concluding that symbolic ethnicity would become a permanent feature of American life, it is clear that as long as it offered much and demanded little, it could in theory persist well into the fifth and sixth generations and perhaps even beyond. This did, however, rest upon a number of factors including public perceptions of ethnics as well as rates of intermarriage. As mixed descent became characteristic of larger numbers of white ethnics, it was possible that even a symbolic ethnic identity could become too complex and confusing to decipher.

### 6.3 Optional Ethnicity

Mary C. Waters (1990) very much picked up from where Gans had left off. In fact, her in-depth interviews with sixty third- and fourth-generation white ethnics in California and Pennsylvania in 1986-87 can be construed as having been a direct attempt to test Gans' hypothesis regarding the existence, and persistence, of symbolic ethnicity. As aforementioned, one of the key reasons why Gans had tendered a hypothesis as such was because in his view there had been insufficient research conducted upon the subject of later-generation white ethnic attitudes toward their ancestries. Waters undoubtedly stepped up to this challenge in the form of her survey studies, the results of which appeared in the form of *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Moreover, the 1980 U.S. Census which had been conducted in the year following Gans' paper had been the first to include questions regarding the ethnic ancestries of all Americans and not just those of the foreign-born and of the offspring of the foreign-born as had previously been the case. The census data revealed that 83 percent of Americans declared an ethnic response, thus prompting the question of to what degree individuals identified with the one or more ethnic backgrounds from which they claimed to be descended.

Waters did in fact find that the majority of her sample attached a significant degree of importance to the ethnic component of their identities. Moreover, these ethnic identities

did not in any way compromise, conflict with, or call into question their Americanness, thus suggesting that to many white ethnics the label ‘American’ alone did not adequately describe their perceptions of identity. In fact, in most cases Waters found that an American identity and a white ethnic identity were for the most part complementary, and that those claiming a hyphenated identity such as Italian-American or Polish-American did so in the belief that, in addition to being American, ethnic descent also factored into the self-identification process. Being an American was so primary an identity that it was taken for granted and rarely thought about, and it was ethnicity that therefore provided the means by which to differentiate oneself from the majority of other Americans. This desire to be different was a vital contributor to the maintenance of an ethnic identity:

Part of the reason that ethnicity is so appealing to people is evident in the reasons people give to the question of *why* they “like being ethnic.” Being ethnic makes them feel unique and special and not just “vanilla,” as one respondent put it. They are not like everyone else. At the same time, being ethnic gives them a sense of belonging to a collectivity.... They work and reside within the mainstream of American middle-class life, yet they retain the interesting benefits—the “specialness” of ethnic allegiance.

(1990: 151-52, original italics)

However, Waters also argues that a key reason why the middle-class white ethnics within her sample found having an ethnic identity so appealing was because the maintenance of such an identity appeared to involve very few prescriptions or proscriptions. As a result, what an ethnic identity entailed varied significantly among her interviewees, ranging from a simple acknowledgment of where ancestors had originated from to something that was deemed to require considerable effort to maintain. This was, without doubt, because the ethnic identities possessed by Waters’ sample were for the most part divorced from any formal or informal group structure or wider ethnic community and hence almost entirely open to individual interpretation and subject to personal choice. This independence to determine the substance and content of ethnic identities meant that individuals were effectively free to select and construct the meanings attached to their identity as well as the degree to which it would play a role in their daily lives. Thus,

although many in her sample group placed a high value on and derived much pleasure from having an ethnic identity, it was commonly “superficial, intermittent, and [one that] does not interfere with day-to-day life” (1990: 91):

An ethnic identity is something that does not affect much in everyday life. It does not, for the most part, limit choice of marriage partner.... It does not determine where you will live, who your friends will be, what job you will have, or whether you will be subject to discrimination. It matters only in voluntary ways—in celebrating holidays with a special twist, cooking a special ethnic meal (or at least calling a meal by a special ethnic name), remembering a special phrase or two in a foreign language.

(1990: 147)

Waters’ findings thus largely support Gans’ concept of symbolic ethnicity. In fact, Waters accepts Gans’ conclusion and suggests that it may very well provide the answer to what she deems to be the typically American yearning for both individuality and community. What is clear is that to many of her interviewees, an ‘American’ identity alone did not satisfactorily represent what they perceived their identities to be—after all there was nothing exotic, in America, about being an American. By identifying with an ethnic background, white ethnics could claim to be both unique as well as part of a wider collective even should there be no practical or demonstrable link between the two:

Symbolic ethnicity fulfils this particularly American need to be “from somewhere.” Having an ethnic identity is something that makes you both special and simultaneously part of a community. It is something that comes to you involuntarily through heredity, and at the same time it is a personal choice. And it allows you to express your individuality in a way that does not make you stand out as in any way different from all kinds of other people.

(1990: 150)

Because of its essentially voluntary character as well as the degree of choice involved, and because symbolic ethnic identities are largely independent of group-conformist



pressures, Waters suggests in a similar vein to Gans that symbolic white ethnic identities could stabilise and become a permanent feature in American life. In effect, because so little is required to sustain such identities there is little reason for them to be discarded, particularly if they continue to contribute to, or at least are *perceived* to contribute to, some sense of individuality. Waters thus argues that even in the face of the continuing dilution of cultural content with each generation, as long as some satisfaction is derived from such identities and as long as they remain reasonably costless, the privatisation and individualisation of ethnicity in symbolic form may in fact guarantee the long-term survival of ethnic identities among white ethnics.

Waters' key contribution is not, however, that of simply substantiating Gans' position. Despite the fact that a great deal of her study focuses upon how intensely those within her sample group identify with a particular ethnic ancestry or ancestries, and the degree to which it impacts upon their daily lives, it is her analysis of the processes by which her interviewees came to have the ethnic identities they professed that is arguably the more valuable component of her thesis. What Waters' study reveals is that the degree of choice available to white ethnics in actual fact extends far beyond that of merely picking and choosing symbols with which to furnish their ethnic identities, and that the selection process involved with respect to ethnic identity formation is often set in motion well in advance of the symbols that are ultimately chosen. The first of these choices entails whether to identify in any way with an ethnic ancestry or to simply identify as 'American'. In effect, the first question white ethnics are faced with in relation to ethnicity is, essentially, whether to melt or not to melt:

The range of choice available to white Americans of European origin about whether or not to identify their ethnic background is quite wide. In a sense they are constantly given an actual choice—they can either identify themselves with their ethnic ancestry or they can “melt” into the wider society and call themselves American.

(1990: 52)

This initial choice itself can be said to arise for two specific reasons. The first is the fact

that Americans are not in any way legally bound to declare their ethnic origins. In contrast to many other countries whose citizens must declare which ethnic group they belong to as part of their official identification, and that which often remains with them for life, in the United States even census questions regarding an individual's ethnic ancestry are not in any way socially- or legally-binding. As a result, individuals are, should they so wish, free to state their ethnic origins as 'white' or 'European' or 'American', even though such responses are not really what the census questions are probing for. At no stage are white ethnics obligated to identify ethnically unless they willingly choose to, and hence ethnicity is not something that necessarily has to be contemplated and made known. This can be understood to be a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

The second reason stems from Waters' claim that white ethnics can melt into the wider society. What this "wider society" signifies is of course a matter of interpretation, yet in this context it can only really mean one thing—*white* society. Thus, the first question that white ethnics are faced with, i.e. whether to identify with an ethnic ancestry or to simply identify as 'American', is in reality a choice of whether to identify with one's ethnic background or to simply remain, so to speak, white. Later-generation white ethnics have been incorporated into the mainstream to a degree to which, in contrast to their immigrant forebears, their whiteness is no longer in any way called into question. Hence, should symbolic identification with an ethnic ancestry signify a "costless" form of identification, this inexorable means that *not* identifying ethnically, i.e. identifying oneself solely as American, is equally costless. When it comes to matters of identity, then, the first choice that white ethnics are faced with is whether to consider themselves in ethnic terms or to disregard ethnic origins altogether and identify simply as American, which in point of fact stands for 'unspecified white'.

Furthermore, the decision to identify ethnically, Waters found, inexorably leads to a further array of choices. This is, of course, counterintuitive in the case of white ethnics of single descent since one would assume that ethnic identification would naturally be in accordance with that one, exclusive ancestry. However, Waters found that...

...even the relationship between believed ethnic origin and self-identification for people of single ancestry involves a series of choices. For instance, individuals who believe their ancestry to be solidly the same in both parents' backgrounds can (and often do) choose to suppress that ancestry and self-identify as "American" or try to pass as having an ancestry they would like to have. The option of identifying as ethnic therefore exists for all white Americans, and further choice of *which* ethnicity to choose is available to some of them.

(1990: 19, original italics)

Waters' intimation that those of single ancestry are conceivably more likely to identify exclusively as American suggests that being of single ancestry is to some a source of discomfort. This could possibly be because having one ethnic origin is perceived to be, in a sense, a 'bit too ethnic' in some eyes since intermarriage, particularly in the post-war period, had been prevalent amongst white ethnics. This line of reasoning relates to Crèvecoeur's observation in the eighteenth century that intermarriage was a common characteristic of Americans. Should one's peers all claim to have complex and interweaving ethnic histories, it is conceivable that being of single ancestry could in some way lead to a measure of discomfort and encourage the adoption of a singular American identity or indeed an outright fabrication of imaginary family lines.

Far greater choice exists, as one would expect, for those of mixed descent that identify ethnically. Waters found that most pick and choose which ancestry or ancestries to identify with, thus entirely disregarding some as well as overlooking the easier and perhaps more obvious option of identifying simply as American. Moreover, many of her interviewees that claimed to identify closely with their ethnic backgrounds frequently mentioned, and at times spontaneously recalled, additional ancestries with which they did not identify in any way. This "selective forgetting," as Waters terms it, underlines the wide array of options open to white ethnics of mixed descent.

A further option available to white ethnics, and particularly to those of mixed descent, is the ability, as it were, to be different things to different people:

...an individual's self-identification does not necessarily have to be the same at all times and places.... Someone whose mother is half Greek and half Polish and whose father is Welsh may self-identify as Greek to close friends and family and as Polish at work, or as Welsh on census documents. An individual may change ethnic identification over time, for various reasons. At various times and places, one is more or less at ease dropping or inventing a self-identification.

(1990: 19)

What Waters found is that for many white ethnics, ethnicity is circumstantially driven. That is to say, not only do white ethnics have the option of identifying or not identifying ethnically, but many of mixed descent can and often do also choose which ethnic background to reveal depending upon the audience. This situational identification amounts to the application of 'rational choice' to the formation and maintenance of white ethnic identities since individuals can emphasise and de-emphasise a given ethnicity according to what is deemed advantageous in a given scenario. This facility signifies an additional 'ethnic option' available to white ethnics.

However, although significant attention has been drawn to the myriad choices available to white ethnics, this does not mean that their ethnic identities are entirely devoid of constraint. Needless to say, ethnic ancestries are not for the most part plucked out of thin air and are largely, if not loosely, based upon what is known about the family history. Contrary to Gans' view that ethnicity is a characteristic of working-class status, Waters in fact found that information as regards ethnic ancestry was more easily accessible for those of higher socioeconomic status, and particularly for those born into families with inherited wealth or property that are subsequently more likely to know about their forebears due to the existence of official records such as wills and title deeds. However, the more decisive role of the family is that pertaining to the socialisation process since the family is typically the conduit through which substantial information about ethnic ancestry is transmitted. Waters draws attention to the importance of the family structure within the socialisation process as she states that:

Families that remain intact over the life cycle of the individual have more time and

opportunity to convey complex information about their ancestry. Families disrupted by divorce, death, or geographic mobility may lose access to both official documents and key informants.... On the other hand, certain family structures and living arrangements may promote the passage of information about ethnic origin and the interest in and socialisation of children into a particular ethnicity. Often one parent would be much more concerned with ancestry or ethnic matters than the other. As a result, many respondents were more identified with one side of the family than the other.

(1990: 60/62)

In the case of families characterised by intermarriage, then, a blueprint of what ethnicity or ethnicities to identify with can be a parental decision or one that is heavily influenced by a significant other, which may or may not necessarily reflect the individual's entire ethnic makeup. By concealing, minimising, or dismissing outright a specific ancestry or ancestries or, conversely, by over-emphasising certain ones as opposed to others, the socialisation process can play a significant role in restricting the number of potential ethnic choices available to individuals. In such cases, individuals may be led to embrace an ethnic identity that does not accurately reflect their ethnic descent.

Waters also rightly highlights the role that surnames play within the ethnic identity-formation process. Despite being unreliable indicators of ethnic ancestry vis-à-vis ethnically mixed families since it has been customary for wives to assume their husbands' family names by which their children are also named, surnames can have a decisive effect upon ethnic identities irrespective of how varied the ethnic background may be. One can envisage a scenario in which an individual could have difficulty proclaiming, for instance, an Italian identity should they bear a distinctly Swedish surname, even if three grandparents are of Italian descent and only the paternal grandfather Swedish. Furthermore, surnames have been changed throughout American history, typically to make them sound more Anglicised and, in some cases, in order to consciously disassociate from a particular ethnic group. Thus, although surnames are considered key indicators of ethnic background they can under certain circumstances lead to imprecise and even out-and-out erroneous presumptions regarding ethnic ancestry.

Despite some constraints, however, white ethnics do nevertheless possess a great deal of scope on matters of identity. This ranges from the option of whether to identify as ethnic or not to which ethnicity or ethnicities to identify with in cases of mixed descent. It is undoubtedly because of the availability of such a degree of choice that Waters found significant levels of flux as well as myriad inconsistencies within her survey data. In fact, Waters found when she re-interviewed her sample at a later date that many had effectively changed their minds regarding which ethnic background they identified with and provided different responses to the same questions. Her data thus suggests that ethnic identification does not necessarily remain constant and that different ethnicities are given greater prominence at different stages of the life cycle. Moreover, the ethnic backgrounds of children when provided by parents did not always correspond to that of the parents, and spouses were also found to not always provide the same answers when asked about their partners' ethnic backgrounds. As a result, Waters argues, some white ethnics "change their minds about what ethnic label to claim as readily as they change their minds about presidential candidates or social issues" (1990: 39). The paradox of changing responses lies in the fact that the common view of ethnicity is that it is primordial—i.e. one's ethnicity is biologically rooted and drawn from whatever ethnic group or groups one's ancestors had belonged to. Despite this, however, many white ethnics consciously or unconsciously seem to choose which ancestries define them and which do not:

The common view among Americans is that ethnicity is primordial, a personal, inherited characteristic like hair colour. Most people assume that ethnic groups are stable categories and that one is a member of a particular ethnic group because one's ancestors were members of that group.... This popular understanding of ethnicity means that people behave as if it were an objective fact even when their own ethnicity is highly symbolic. This belief that ethnicity is biologically based acts as a constraint on the ethnic choices of some Americans, but there is nonetheless a range of latitude available in deciding how to identify oneself...

(1990: 17/18)

Changing ethnic responses among white ethnics can also be influenced by perceptions regarding their attractiveness. In effect, this suggests something of an ethnic group ranking system within which some ethnic backgrounds are perceived to be more desirable than others. For instance, should an individual be of mixed Italian and, say, Russian descent and had routinely identified as Russian-American, the pervasiveness of Italian-American themes in the popular media and positive portrayals of Italian culture could result in the individual switching allegiance and giving greater prominence to the Italian component of their descent. Thus, although ethnicity is commonly regarded as fixed, many white ethnics are able to change their minds over the course of their lifetimes, particularly in response to how they imagine a particular ethnic background will be socially received.

It is Waters' contention, however, that white ethnics are for the most part unaware that their ethnic identities are to a great extent optional, symbolic, costless, and personal, and are equally oblivious to the leeway they possess with regard to the process of determining their relationship to their ethnic backgrounds. This, in combination with popular perceptions of ethnicity being a fixed and biologically-rooted attribute, leads many white ethnics to believe that all ethnicities are equal and interchangeable. In effect, by identifying ethnically and by drawing attention to ethnicity rather than race, white ethnics may invariably liken the role that their identities play in their lives with those of non-white minority groups thereby implying a common experience. Yet by doing so, white ethnics overlook the fact that whites and non-whites have been, and in some respects still are, subjected to very different circumstances:

If invoking an ethnic background is increasingly a voluntary, individual decision, and if it is understood that invoking that background is done for the enjoyment of the personality traits or rituals that one associates with one's ethnicity, then ethnicity itself takes on certain individual and positive connotations. The process and content of a symbolic ethnicity then make it increasingly difficult for whites to sympathise with or understand the experience of a non-symbolic ethnicity—the experience of racial minorities in the United States.

(1990: 164)

By presuming that all Americans can also slip in and out of their ethnic identities as and when they so choose denies the fact that ethnicity, or more accurately race, is a permanent feature in the daily lives of non-white Americans. Waters implies that the very presumption that all ethnic backgrounds are equal leans toward racism, particularly if white ethnics equate the prejudice and discrimination faced by their forebears with that experienced by non-whites and compare the contemporary socioeconomic statuses of white ethnic groups with certain non-white groups. This lack of awareness that ancestry is not optional for all and that it is, in contrast to being merely symbolic, more a permanent badge that various others are compelled to wear thus denies the vast disparities in historical experience within America's unique racial structure. The application of equality, Waters argues, contributes significantly to white ethnic opposition to affirmative action programmes and other legislation aimed at redressing racial inequalities, since if all ethnicities are equal then such programmes are often perceived to be inequitable. Nevertheless, Waters does believe that symbolic ethnicity will persist among white ethnics, and claims that Americans of all backgrounds should be able to exercise the ethnic options that are available to white ethnics.

#### 6.4 Symbolic and Optional Ethnicity in Context

Both Gans' notion of 'symbolic ethnicity' and Waters' findings need to be considered within the context of the period within which they came to light. Indeed, Gans' seminal paper was published in 1979, on the eve of what would be the start of two successive Reagan administrations. Waters' study, on the other hand, was conducted mid-way through Reagan's second term in office. This period of Republican political domination undoubtedly bears heavily upon both Gans' and Waters' findings.

Whatever distance had been created between white ethnicities and race-based whiteness during the 1960s and 1970s came to be drastically abridged in the 1980s under the Reagan, and later Bush Sr., administrations. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, and national origin and, as underlined in Chapter 4, affirmative action policies enacted by the Johnson



administration had opened doors to non-whites that had previously suffered employment discrimination and glass ceilings. Moreover, many white ethnics could effectively disassociate from whiteness and claim minority status on the basis of national origin and/or religion. One result of these developments, which had led to the advancement of ethno-racial minorities at an unprecedented rate, was a growing perception among whites, and particularly white males, that whiteness itself had become an oppressed racial category and that being *both* white *and* male constituted a double disadvantage within America's new framework of racial and gender equality (Daniels, 1997). Those white ethnics that had mobilised on the basis of common ancestry in an effort to stem the advancement of blacks and other non-whites into industries and residential districts formerly monopolised by southern and eastern European-descent communities now shared a common socio-economic enemy with older stock whites whose patience with the civil rights era's supposed liberal guilt exercises had begun to wear thin.

Ronald Reagan was undoubtedly attuned to such widespread feelings of white resentment which almost certainly played a pivotal role in helping him win two consecutive landslide victories in the presidential elections of 1980 and 1984. During the Civil Rights era, legislative changes instituted by President Johnson had not only cemented group identity and group rights within America's socio-economic and political structure but also, owing to his vision of a 'Great Society' and 'war on poverty', had extended the welfare state well beyond the historic reforms of Roosevelt's New Deal policies of the 1930s. Thus, to many whites, as Reagan would have certainly been aware, the civil rights era had given birth to legislation that had, to all intents and purposes, delivered a *double advantage* for blacks—the extension of welfare programmes had disproportionately benefited poor blacks; and affirmative action policies had enabled more ambitious blacks to attain better jobs, purportedly at the expense of better qualified whites. Thus, to many whites, civil rights had gone too far. This deepening racial division and animosity as a result of policies perceived to give blacks preferential treatment is underlined by Vargas (2006):

Public opinion became increasingly antagonistic to government spending on programmes for the poor, revealing deepening gulfs between Blacks and Whites on

issues related to the role of the state. Asked whether government should provide jobs or let every person get ahead on his or her own, 70 percent of the Black persons sampled asserted their belief in government intervention against 30 percent who would rather see the state step back on this matter. Whites, on the other hand, while divided in similar proportions, nevertheless chose the opposite remedy: 62 percent contended that government should let “every person get ahead on his own,” while 38 percent thought government help was necessary.

(2006: 37-38)

Reagan’s remedy came about in the form of his vision of a ‘colour-blind society’, which involved the dismantling of group rights and a return to the more traditional American emphasis on individualism. This remedy as good as neutralised the perceived double advantage that many whites believed blacks had benefited from following the civil rights movement and was achieved via the effective reversal of a number of President Johnson’s reforms of the 1960s.

Reagan’s first move was to initiate the dismantling of affirmative action at all levels of government. In fact, as early as 1981 the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division declared that:

The Justice Department will not retreat one step from its historic commitment to enforce the federal civil rights laws, but we will no longer insist upon, or in any respect support, the use of quotas or any numerical or statistical formula designed to provide the non-victims of discrimination preferential treatment based on race, sex, national origin or religion.

(cited in Fobanjong, 2003: 20)

In the following year, Reagan insisted that racially discriminatory private schools, as in the case of Bob Jones University which prohibited interracial dating, were entitled to tax-exempt status unless specified otherwise by Congress, and in 1985 pronounced that some civil rights organisations had achieved their objectives and had therefore become defunct. In that very same year, the Justice Department “urged over fifty states, counties, and

cities to voluntarily modify their affirmative action plans to remove numerical goals and quotas” (Omi and Winant, 1994: 134). With the benefit of hindsight, this cloaked attack on civil rights legislation under the guise of a ‘colour-blind society’ should not have come as a complete surprise from a President that had opposed both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965. Nevertheless, Reagan’s supposed colour-blind vision disproportionately affected many blacks that had been reliant upon affirmative action quotas for upward mobility in the workplace.

According to Omi and Winant, the neo-conservatism that characterised the Reagan administrations involved the re-articulation of racial ideology via the use of “code words” which emerged in the form of “phrases and symbols which refer indirectly to racial themes, but do not directly challenge popular democratic or egalitarian ideals” (1994: 123). Indeed, Reagan’s trademark emphasis on ‘family, work, neighbourhood, freedom, and peace’ was something that many whites undoubtedly found alluring, but which also implicitly pointed a finger at blacks and others on the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder. His stressing of the significance of family inexorably drew attention to the prevalence of single-parent households among poor blacks and, by the same token, the importance placed on work held the unemployed and those reliant on welfare—once again a status that disproportionately characterised blacks—wholly responsible for their own plight. In addition, countless whites undoubtedly found Reagan’s emphasis on neighbourhood particularly appealing, since many formerly all-white neighbourhoods had and were becoming increasingly fragmented by non-white, and principally black, residential in-migration.

Taken together, the Reagan administrations’ policies certainly embodied a lethal weapon against the civil rights gains of the preceding two decades. His dismantling of affirmative action quotas and group rights, in conjunction with his emphasis on individualism, made Reagan an enticing presidential candidate to those who felt that racial equality had been achieved by 1980 as well as to those that indignantly felt that too much had already been done to rectify past injustices. The drastic curtailment of social security programmes on the premise that welfare was “not only ineffective, but indeed it exacerbated poverty,

crippling the recipient's work ethic and sense of responsibility" (Vargas, 2006: 37), disproportionately affected many blacks that had previously been hoisted above the poverty line by the welfare reforms instituted in the civil rights era. And it all transpired in the absence of race-language, since by proclaiming colour-blindness and the primacy of the individual, the poor, who simply happened to be disproportionately black, were individually held responsible for their own condition. By utilising what can only be regarded as a Social Darwinist approach, the responsibility for socio-economic advancement was placed solely upon the shoulders of the individual and any lack of advancement attributed entirely to individual shortcomings and not to any external, or historic, social forces or circumstances.

It would certainly be a fair question, at this point, as to how white ethnics featured in the ideological matrix of the 1980s, and the answer lies within the results of what Andrew Sabl regards as "perhaps the most famous focus group in history" (2002: 160). The focus group in question is that surveyed by the Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg in Macomb County, a suburb of Michigan, Detroit, in the aftermath of the Democratic Party's second consecutive landslide defeat to Reagan in the presidential election of 1984. The subjects of Greenberg's study were "Reagan Democrats"—working-class whites who considered themselves to be Democrats but had voted for Reagan in 1980 and 1984. The Reagan Democrats typically included Catholic white ethnics in the Northeast, and those in Detroit were, in the main, unionised autoworkers. Macomb County was of particular interest since its residents had voted overwhelmingly for Kennedy and Johnson in the 1960s, only to vote in similar measure for Reagan in the 1980s.

Reagan's success in drawing Democrats into the Republican fold, particularly via his use of codified language, was simply an extension of the 'Southern strategy' employed by Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign. Nixon's strategists had effectively used race as a wedge issue to appeal to white Southern racists fundamentally opposed to the civil rights successes of the 1960s and subsequent calls for racial desegregation and busing. Like Nixon before him, Reagan also employed such code words as "states' rights" which discursively supported the rights of southern states to resist racial integration.

However, unlike white Southern racists that had been fundamentally opposed to civil rights legislation and who had brought about the realignment of the South to the Republican Party in 1968, the Reagan Democrats also included Catholic white ethnics in the Northeast and the residents of Macomb County, as aforementioned, had in the past voted for Kennedy and Johnson and, therefore, had supported their civil rights agendas. Hence, Greenberg's study was one that sought to account for Macomb County's political u-turn and determine exactly what had enticed its residents, as well as other Democrats like them, to vote for Reagan in 1980 and 1984.

Greenberg's results were certainly revealing, and indicated that the Reagan Democrats had abandoned the Democratic Party because they themselves had felt the Party had abandoned them amid their crusade to improve the condition of the socio-economic underclass, particularly blacks. For these working-class white ethnics, the Democrats no longer championed their interests and Reagan's emphasis on traditional values, undoubtedly aided by his charisma and media-honed communication skills, had successfully enticed them into the Republican fold. However, perhaps the most revealing aspect of Greenberg's study is the blatant racism that characterised those he surveyed:

These white defectors from the Democratic party expressed a profound distaste for black Americans, a sentiment that pervaded almost everything they thought about government and politics. Blacks constituted the explanation for their vulnerability and for almost everything that had gone wrong in their lives; not being black was what constituted being middle class; not living with blacks was what made a neighbourhood a decent place to live... These suburban voters felt nothing in common with Detroit and its people and rejected out of hand the social-justice claims of black Americans.

(Greenberg, 1995: 39)

It is undoubtedly for this reason that Clarence J. Munford argues that the Reagan Democrats should more fittingly be dubbed "anti-Black Democrats" (1996: 496). Similarly, it is Daniel J. O'Neils contention that the Reagan Democrats "In a homogeneous society, uncomplicated by racial division and the cultural

revolution...would probably be loyal social democrats” (1995: 98). To be sure, the white ethnics of Macomb County would undoubtedly have been aware of the civil rights reform agendas of both Kennedy and Johnson when voting overwhelmingly in their favour in the 1960s, thus indicative of a sympathetic stance toward the plight of blacks. But by 1980 this support had undoubtedly been vanquished by the degree to which many felt blacks had advanced at their expense. The racially motivated sedition that Greenberg uncovered was, however, something that Martin Luther King, Jr. had foreseen in 1967:

...as Negroes move forward toward a fundamental alteration of their lives, some bitter white opposition is bound to grow, even within groups that were hospitable to earlier superficial amelioration. Conflicts are unavoidable because a stage has been reached in which the reality of equality will require extensive adjustments in the way of life for some of the white majority. Many of our supporters will fall by the way side as the movement presses against financial privilege.

(1967: 95)

Needless to say, the attack on group rights under consecutive Republican administrations during the 1980s also neutralised the capacity for white ethnics themselves to claim minority status for potential advantage. Yet this was an infinitesimal price to pay, for the pendulum had started to swing back in the direction of the pre-civil rights status quo when white ethnics had a categorical advantage over blacks. Indeed, the dismantling of affirmative action quotas had effectively negated the need for white ethnicities to function as rallying points within the post-civil rights socio-economic framework. By the same token, the re-embodiment of notions of individualism provided the analgesic that eased the consciences of both whites and white ethnics with regard to the nation’s historic injustices toward blacks. In Reagan’s colour-blind America it had once again become ‘all right to be white’, and this undoubtedly diminished the need for white ethnic disassociation from historic white privilege. Whiteness, as a marker of privilege, was once again becoming acceptable.

### 6.5 White Ethnicities vis-à-vis Race

The assertion of ethnic identities by Americans of southern and eastern European descent and the largely symbolic, individualised, and optional nature of these identities, as Gans and Waters have highlighted, thus inexorably necessitates consideration of their significance vis-à-vis other groups within America's racialised social structure. A key question arises with regard to how white ethnics, whose identities function as symbols of variegated whiteness, perceive and ascertain the identities of those not of European descent as well as where white ethnic identities are situated within the markedly race-based socioeconomic structure of American society. The answer to this quintessentially hinges upon popular conceptions of race and ethnicity. That is to say, if race is commonly held to be fixed and fundamental and if ethnicity is equally regarded as being similarly fixed and biologically-rooted, then the question arises as to where the one ends and the other begins.

The fact remains that Americans continue to be broadly categorised in primarily racial terms despite the popularity of notions of ethnicity and calls from some scientific and social-scientific quarters for the American system of demographic classification to be based upon ethnic ancestry rather than race. For the most part, however, Americans continue to be divided into five state-sanctioned racial categories—African American or black, Asian American, Euro-American or white, Hispanic, and Native American, referred to by Hollinger (2000) as the 'ethno-racial pentagon'. "Fewer and fewer Americans believe in the biological reality of races," Hollinger maintains, "but they are remarkably willing to live with an officially sanctioned system of demographic classification that replicates precisely the crude, colloquial categories, black, yellow, white, red, and brown" (2000: 8). Moreover, this predominantly race-based configuration of American society is not one that is likely to be abandoned, for reasons Fenton (2003) underlines:

First, censuses have an in-built conservatism because of the desire to have comparable data over successive decades. Second, federal programmes and resource allocation depend on data collection. In this sense 'races' are given real

administrative and public reality in the USA. Third, the discourse of 'race' is so powerful and historic in the USA that groups have invested a lot of meaning in race terminology.... Fourth, the material social relations—the distribution of wealth and power—of groups identified as black, white and other categories, remain embedded sociologically.

(2003: 192-93)

Thus, should the case be that race is, and will remain, a permanent feature on the American landscape, the question arises as to how and where white ethnicities fit into this race-centred reality. The likely answer is that ethnicity in the United States is commonly understood not as an alternative to race but as something that is 'possessed' *in addition* to race. From this perspective, racial distinctions endure but those within racial categories are presumed to be further subdivided into ethnic groups and are held to be distinct only from others within their respective racial category. The notion of ethnicity as a subunit of race is demonstrated by the widespread use of the term 'white ethnics' to describe those of southern and eastern European descent in the United States. They are 'white' as well as 'ethnic' and are racially set apart from those descended from ethnic groups that lie within the boundaries of other racial categories. The primacy of race thus suggests that Americans most likely perceive each other first and foremost in racial terms with ethnicity signifying a further, and peripheral, mode of distinguishing between those of the same race.

The apparent persistence of white ethnic identities following the events of the 1960s and 1970s thus raises questions regarding the relationship between race and ethnicity, since those emphasising specific European-origin identities are, to all intents and purposes, stressing the primacy of ethnicity. This in turn raises questions with regard to the consistency by which ethnicity is both asserted and assigned. For instance, to presume that identifying as Italian-American or Polish-American is equivalent to identifying as Asian-American is to mistakenly equate an ethnic category with a racial one:

The sudden transformation of a great number of distinctive ethnic identities into Euro-America ought to make white Americans more sensitive to the comparable



erasures of diversity that attend on the other four, pseudoprimal categories, some of which have been sanctioned by longer use.... The identity one attributes to Americans whose ancestors were Koreans, Cambodians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese by calling them all Asian Americans (or, in the older usage, Orientals) is obtained by diminishing the differences between them and other Americans of Asian extraction.

(Hollinger, 2000: 26-27)

There is nevertheless something of a catch-22 scenario with respect to the manner by which white ethnics identify those of other racial groups. For white ethnics to identify others in racial terms is to effectively deny the diversity that lies within their respective racial groups that they themselves are asserting in the form of European national-origin identities. However, by applying ethnicity equally to all, i.e. by presuming that, say, Italian American is equivalent to Cambodian American is to diminish the role played by racial distinctions, not ethnic ones, in the lives of non-white Americans. For instance, when Americans complete equal opportunities forms during the course of seeking employment, as provided for by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it is not so much in order to ascertain which ethnic group an individual identifies with but, rather, in order to counteract the potential for discrimination based upon how an individual is, in practice, racially perceived—i.e. it is often not a question of whether one is of Italian or Cambodian descent but whether one is white or Asian. Thus the equal application of ethnicity to all groups denies the often pivotal role that race plays in the lives of many non-white Americans.

However, Asian Americans and Hispanics often can and do identify with an ethnic or national-origin identity, and even those that identify as Native American typically claim to be descended from one tribe or another. Thus the option exists, as it does for whites, for many within those respective groups to assert an ethnic, or sub-racial, identity. But all discussions of ethnicity effectively cut African Americans, barring voluntary black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean and their descendants, out of the picture entirely. This is by and large due to the tragic circumstances that governed the involuntary immigration of blacks to America. Those descended from enslaved blacks

have no record of from where in Africa their ancestors originated, and the then common practice of substituting African forenames with Christian ones and tribal surnames with those of slaveholders, as indications of possession, means that many African Americans can at best trace their ancestry only as far back as to those to whom their ancestors belonged and not to any particular ethnic or tribal group. This vacuum of knowledge with regard to ethnic descent was underlined by Malcolm X in a speech to grassroots African American activists shortly prior to his assassination:

The number one thing that makes us different from other people is our lack of knowledge concerning the past. Proof of which: almost anyone else can come into this country and get around barriers and obstacles that we cannot get around; and the only difference between them and us; they know something about the past, and in knowing something about the past, they know something about themselves, they have an identity. But wherein you and I differ from them is primarily revolved around our lack of knowledge concerning the past.

(1990: 5)

Because the African American category typically cannot be broken down into various ethnic components as with other racial groups, African Americans thus signify *both* a racial group *and* an ethnic group. This carries significant implications with regard to group comparisons since an ethnicity-based approach necessarily considers the African American category to be an equal unit of analysis to that of, say, Italian American. In effect, by emphasising ethnicity, the relevance of race is effectively eliminated as a factor when comparing specific European-origin groups with African Americans. In such cases it is no longer a comparison between whites and blacks, among whom there is a long and sordid racialised history, but between two corresponding ethnic minority groups.

The assertion of white ethnic identities and the application of ethnicity theory to non-white groups, thereby eliminating the race factor and making them all comparable units of analysis, subsequently make it easier to draw correlations between them. From this position, then, the prejudice and discrimination once faced by white ethnic groups can be likened to that faced by non-white groups, and the upward mobility achieved by white

ethnics in spite of it, having eliminated the race factor, can imply that white ethnics possess some inherently superior quality that has enabled them to prosper in the face of comparably trying conditions. As a result, as Omi and Winant state:

The entire model for comparing and evaluating the success of ethnic groups in achieving higher status or in being incorporated into the majority society is limited by an unwillingness to consider whether there might be any special circumstances which racially defined minorities encounter in the U.S., circumstances which definitively distinguish their experiences from those of earlier European immigrants, and make the injunction to “pull yourselves up by your own bootstraps” impossible to fulfil.

(1994: 22)

One possible interpretation of the equal application of the ethnicity paradigm to non-whites, as highlighted by Omi and Winant via the “bootstraps” analogy, is that it surreptitiously cloaks racist attitudes. This is suggested by Waters (1990) who argues that the largely symbolic and costless identities embraced by many white ethnics could potentially bring about a “subtle reinforcement of racism” (1990: 164) since the application of ethnicity theory to non-whites, based upon the premise that all ethnicities are equal, essentially masks the highly racialised and largely inegalitarian experiences of non-white ethnics. The paradox of such a scenario lies in the fact that the very denial by white ethnics of their privileged racial status can in itself constitute an expression of racism.

In addition to this, both Waters (1990) and Omi and Winant (1994) argue that white ethnics do not in practice acknowledge ethnic distinctions among non-whites and to all intents and purposes customarily aggregate those of other races. Thus, despite emphasising the ethnic diversity that exists within the Euro-American bloc by asserting specific national-origin identities, to white ethnics those of non-white descent “all look alike” and are routinely categorised in racial as opposed to ethnic terms. From this perspective, then, ethnicity theory is not genuinely applied to all and white ethnicities such as Italian American or Polish American are considered to be analogous not to

Cambodian American or Cuban American but to the racial categories Asian American and Hispanic respectively. Consequently, rather than equating white ethnic groups with non-white ethnic groups, white ethnicities are effectively promoted to a quasi-racial category and held to be distinct from race-based whiteness.

The notion that the racial aggregation of non-whites by white ethnics could in itself be racist is, however, questionable on two grounds. The first springs from the presumption that the identification of others in racial terms takes place in only one direction—i.e. it is white ethnics that identify non-whites racially whilst at the same time self-identifying in ethnic terms. Neither Waters nor Omi and Winant attend to the possibility, and indeed the probability, that the racial categorisation of others could in fact be a reciprocal process and that the white ethnicities that lie within the Euro-American bloc, regardless of how energetically they are expressed, are by the same token largely ignored by non-whites. This is, of course, a reference once again to the somewhat comprehensive primacy of race within American society. Bearing in mind the claim that to whites those of other races ‘all look alike’, there is correspondingly little reason to presume that this process of racial assignment is not reciprocated and that to non-whites all whites equally look alike. “Some Jewish Americans might take great pride in their particularity as Jews,” Hollinger highlights, “but from the viewpoint of many African Americans...it is the whiteness of the whole lot of them that counts” (2000: 28). From this line of reasoning, then, white ethnicities as well as non-white ethnicities are equally irrelevant within the framework of popular racial conceptions.

The second reason stems from the fact that non-white racial identities were actively endorsed by those that comprised these respective racial categories. The civil rights era and particularly the Black Power movement promoted a distinctly race-based black identity. Similarly, the Yellow Power movement advanced a pan-ethnic/racial Asian American identity and campaigned for equal opportunities not for a specific ethnic group but on behalf of all those of Southeast Asian descent. Americans of indigenous descent correspondingly united in the form of the pan-tribal American Indian Movement. The Brown Power movement is possibly the one exception since it was centred almost

exclusively upon Mexican American concerns, but it is clear that racial identities, as opposed to ethnic ones, were bolstered by the race-based activities of the same non-white ethnic groups that occupied these categories. Thus, at the very same time that white ethnics were mobilising around specific ethnic group concerns, non-whites had and were mobilising not around ethnic concerns but around pan-ethnic/racial ones. With this in mind, then, it is questionable to what extent white ethnics, regardless of their own mode of identification, can be reproached for identifying non-whites in racial rather than ethnic terms.

The “bootstraps” analogy may, however, have some substance to it. By emphasising a particular white ethnicity as distinct from the historically dominant white majority, white ethnics can take pride in their socioeconomic achievements not as whites but as ethnics. After all, white ethnic immigrant groups were undoubtedly considered inferior and as racial outsiders upon arrival, and had therefore faced significant prejudice and discrimination. Moreover, most had arrived with very little and despite having faced significant adversity had achieved upward mobility to become successfully incorporated into the mainstream. Thus, by identifying with a particular less-than-idyllic immigrant legacy, white ethnics can draw parallels between themselves and those of other backgrounds and effectively employ a results-based model that holds non-white minority groups wholly responsible for their own advancement, or lack of advancement, within America’s socio-economic structure. From this angle it is certainly possible for the emphasis on white ethnicities to cloak racist attitudes since it can lead to a belief that, for instance, if Italian Americans and Polish Americans could achieve parity with older stock whites within three generations from the point of immigration then there must therefore be something intrinsically inferior within the ethno-cultural makeup of, say, Cambodian Americans and Mexican Americans, that have prevented them from achieving a comparable level of socioeconomic success within the same timeframe. By overlooking racial factors and applying the same European immigrant model to all, white ethnicities can disguise perceptions of ethno-racial and cultural superiority, that is to say—racism. That is not to say that symbolic white ethnicities are by definition racist but, for whites that hold racist views, identifying with a white ethnic group as opposed to broader white

society can arguably make such views easier to contend with.

### 6.6 Ethnic or Racial Identity?

Within this context, then, the question arises as to whether the upsurge in white ethnic activity during the 1960s and 1970s was in fact just a ‘wave’ or ‘bump’ that does not consequentially invalidate the straight-line assimilation model. Furthermore, it also raises questions as to whether both Gans’ observations and Waters’ findings represent such a wave or bump or whether they can and/or should be regarded as enduring phenomena.

Some indication regarding the future of white ethnicities can be found within a study conducted by Richard D. Alba (1990), who has beforehand been cited within the previous chapter. Emerging in the form of *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* in the same year in which Waters’ thesis on ‘optional ethnicity’ was published, Alba’s study is effectively an analysis of his 1984-85 survey data of 524 randomly chosen and predominantly white ethnic residents in New York State. Akin to Waters’ study, Alba also appears to have set out to test Gans’ notion of ‘symbolic ethnicity’ and consulted Gans himself in the process of drawing up the all-important survey questionnaire. “As will be apparent to even the most cursory glance,” Alba states in his preface, “the book owes a considerable intellectual debt to Gans’ conception of “symbolic ethnicity”” (1990: xiv). This intellectual debt has undoubtedly been repaid by way of Alba’s finding that ethnicity is, for his subjects at least, largely symbolic, voluntary, and superficial in character. In fact, he clearly states that:

The general outlines of symbolic ethnicity offer a far better fit to the emerging nature of ethnic identity—essentially in the desire to retain a sense of being ethnic, but without any deep commitment to ethnic social ties or behaviours.

(1990: 306)

Alba also corroborates Waters’ thesis that white ethnics have a considerable degree of choice in relation to their ethnic identities and argues in a similar vein that “Among

whites in the contemporary United States, identification with an ethnic group is a choice, not something externally imposed” (1990: 61). However, given the title of his book, Alba’s main thesis is that ‘White America’ is in a process of “transformation.” This is undoubtedly due to the progressive decline in the objective and structural aspects of ethnicity, owing to such factors as generational distance, knowledge of mother tongues, upward mobility, and intermarriage, as have been outlined within the previous chapter. Alba identifies intermarriage as the driving force behind this decline, particularly since the 1980 census revealed that three-quarters of all marriages of whites traversed at least one ethnic boundary. Moreover, he clearly demarcates ethnic identities from ethnic groups and argues that the apparent individualisation and privatisation of ethnicity, in the form of post-civil rights symbolic identities, do not appear to play a particularly significant role within the broader realms of common understandings of ethnicity:

If ethnic identity is to have a social, as opposed to a merely personal, significance, it must be linked to activities and relationships that have an ethnic character, the behavioural correlates of identity: how is it typically expressed in terms of such culturally linked behaviours as food habits and holiday rituals? Is it rooted in social structures—relationships to others that are forged on the basis of common ethnicity? Unless ethnic identity is linked to behaviour, it cannot contribute to ethnicity as a social form.

(1990: 26)

Of course, Alba’s point is not particularly novel but it certainly is crucial. If the objective and structural markers of ethnicity have declined in salience so, then, has the ethnic boundary demarcating a specific group from other groups as well as the identifier’s relationship and/or attachment to it. What this implies is that the assertion of a specific ethnic identity need not necessarily indicate that the individual in question has any concrete ties, save by means of bloodline, to that respective ethnic group.

It is this that embodies Alba’s contention that ‘White America’ is transforming. With the waning of ethnic peculiarities between white ethnic groups, particularly in light of ever-increasing rates of intermarriage, Alba argues that a new ethnic group is being formed

incorporating all those of European descent:

Ethnic distinctions based on European ancestry, once quite important in the texture of American social life, are receding into the background. Yet this development does not imply that ethnicity is any less embedded in the social fabric, but rather that the ethnic distinctions which matter are undergoing radical shift. The transformation of ethnicity among whites does not portend the elimination of ethnicity but instead the formation of a new ethnic group: one based on ancestry from anywhere on the European continent.

(1990: 292-93)

Alba's claim that this transformation does not herald the demise of white ethnicity is somewhat ambiguous, and consequently raises two vital questions. Firstly, does this new ethnic group also include older-stock whites, or is it in fact one that incorporates only the descendants of southern and eastern European immigrants? Such a group, however, could only emerge had intermarriage taken place exclusively between white ethnics. Secondly, should this new group, which Alba refers to as 'European Americans', include all Americans whose ancestors arrived from *any* part of Europe and at any stage in American history, the question arises as to whether this really is a "transformation" of ethnicity or simply symptomatic of the comprehensive assimilation of white ethnics into America's historic race-based *white* racial category? Should this be the case, Alba is simply shying away from calling a spade a spade since if he is applying an ethnicity-based model in order to account for the declining importance of ethnic distinctions among white ethnics, the likely result would be the incorporation of white ethnics into the white *racial* category—the very same model that considers blacks to be simply one of a multitude of equivalent demographic units. Alba's 'European American' ethnic group is almost certainly one founded upon racial categories and not upon European national origins since this would necessarily imply, for instance, that those of black British or of French *Maghrébin* descent would also be incorporated within this ethnic group, whereas those of white *Afrikaner* descent would correspondingly be classified as 'African American'. The sheer improbability of this transpiring, as things stand, undoubtedly suggests that 'European American' does in fact mean 'white'.



At this point, the most obvious question that emerges is how it is possible for such a group to emerge in light of the fact that Alba upholds both Gans' and Waters' hypotheses. After all, ethnicity is associated with ethnic groups, which Alba differentiates from the ethnic identities of individuals. Nevertheless, there remains a startling contradiction with regard to Alba's projection of the future of such identities. Indeed, on the one hand he concludes that:

The weight of evidence appears to suggest a long-term decline in the role of ethnic identities among whites....the impact of some large-scale and seemingly irreversible demographic changes in the white population seems quite plain: mixed, and especially complex, ancestry; membership in the fourth and later generations; and uncertainty about one's ethnic background. All reduce the probability of identifying in ethnic terms and the personal meaningfulness of ethnic identity. These characteristics are increasing in the white population as a result of such forces as advancing generational status and high rates of interethnic marriage, making it likely that ethnic identities will, in the future, decline in frequency and in felt importance.

(1990: 73)

However, Alba equally construes that:

There is good reason to believe that ethnic identities will continue among Americans of European ancestries, even as they become increasingly detached from ethnic structures of any sort, which are slowly succumbing to the powerful, incessant tide of assimilation. Such ethnic identities fit well with the individualism of American life, and accordingly they will become increasingly personal in nature, largely creatures of individual inclinations and tastes rather than social attachments.

(1990: 318)

Because of this contradiction it is not entirely clear as to what Alba's thesis really is. However, the relevance of Alba's work rests in its consideration of a "transformation" among white ethnics and the relationship between the descendants of southern and

eastern European immigrants and ‘White America’ in the main, as well as with the theory of straight-line assimilation.

A more revealing study of white ethnicities is found in the work of Charles A. Gallagher (1997; 2003) following his analyses of ethnic identities among students at “Urban University” a decade after Alba’s survey. Gallagher in fact found that a healthy majority of his eighty-nine interviewees did not in any way define themselves in ethnic terms and he states that:

The markers of ethnic identity have all but disappeared. A “subjective belief in common descent” did not exist for the majority of my respondents. These students could not speak, nor had they been exposed to, a “mother tongue.” They did not feel obligated to marry or date people from similar ethnic backgrounds. Nor did they derive a “sense of honour” from being part of an ethnic group....The generation of older whites who were part of the “ethnic revival” and who used their ethnicity as the basis for group claims has been displaced by one that feels increasingly comfortable using their racial identity as the sole carrier of their interests.

(1997: 8)

For the majority of Gallagher’s subjects, then, an ethnic identity rooted in a European national origin is, for the most part, non-existent. His respondents are so far removed from their ancestors’ immigrant experiences and traditions and had been born into families so ethnically mixed that ethnicity no longer functioned as a basis for identity. Ethnic origin had become “incidental background information” (2003: 145) and the identity vacuum that it had left in its wake had been permeated by one grounded in race since, as Gallagher claims, “it is racial, not ethnic, identity that is bound up in popular culture and the political order” (1997: 8). As the twentieth century was drawing to a close, it was race that was overwhelmingly directing the identity formation process of young white ethnics:

The majority of whites in this study have come to understand themselves and their

interests as white. Many of my respondents now think about themselves as whites, not as ethnics; they see themselves as individuals who are members of a racial category with its own particular set of interests. They have attached new meanings to being white and have used those meanings as the basis for forging an identity centred around race.

(1997: 7)

Needless to say, a crucial difference between Gallagher's subjects and those interviewed by Waters (1990) and Alba (1990) and, to some extent, those observed by Gans (1979) lies in their generational status. Gallagher's interviewees had all been born around 1975 whereas those interviewed by Waters and Alba in the 1980s were, for the most part, those that had either been adults during the upsurge or had effectively grown up witnessing the explosion of ethnic interests and concerns of that period. Gallagher's cohort, in contrast, were those that had matured under the Reagan and Bush Sr. administrations, the majority of whom would have reached voting age not long into the new, and Democrat, Clinton administration.

This timing is crucial, since those interviewed by Gallagher belong to the generation that first beheld the effects of the stratification of colour-coded identities. The members of this generation are effectively white by default, being neither black, brown, yellow, or red. They had grown up in an era within which the United States was described as a colour-blind meritocracy within which anything was achievable as long as the individual had a modicum of talent and worked hard. To this generation, slavery is a thing of the past and the civil rights movement a historic event studied in textbooks at school. Proclamations of America's colour-blindness in conjunction with the emergence of a non-white middle class was undoubtedly evidence enough for many young white ethnic adults on the eve of the twenty-first century that the playing field had effectively been levelled.

It should come as little surprise, then, that to this cohort—the Reagan Generation—any form of affirmative action is considered grossly unfair since any past injustices had correspondingly been addressed and rectified by the preceding generation before they had

even been born. In contrast to many white ethnics of the previous generation that had embraced European national origin identities in order to disassociate from white privilege, these young white ethnics see little reason to deny their whiteness. Whatever obstacles or constraints that may inhibit an individual's advancement is attributable solely to the individual's aptitude and commitment, and contemporary complaints of racism and discrimination by non-whites, particularly blacks, sound like broken records to which a common response, at least in thought, is undoubtedly "get over it." To this generation, whiteness is simply one of five equal colours that make up American society, and whose members see no reason as to why their racial categorisation should be held against them, as Gallagher highlights:

To feel or express guilt would suggest that whites may have certain advantages on a social system based on the principles of equal opportunity, meritocracy, and colour blindness. Ignoring the role of race in American history erases any sense that whites should feel any guilt for the privileges that have provided them with greater economic mobility relative to blacks.

(2003: 154)

Despite this white confidence, however, Gallagher also found that his respondents "would generate similar disparate (and at times schizophrenic) renderings when asked what meaning they attached to their race" (1997: 6). This is undoubtedly due to the fact that although most were comfortable being white and saw little reason to disassociate from it, many continued to utilise their ethnic origins in response to allegations of white privilege. This is, of course, a startling contradiction vis-à-vis the supposed colour-blind American meritocracy within which whiteness was simply one of a number of equal colours and bore no advantage over any other. In other words, should one not have to apologise for being white then there is no cogent reason to cite a white ethnic background in order to justify a privileged status, yet that is precisely what Gallagher found:

As the importance of ethnicity wanes in the lives of young whites, the immigration experience of older (or dead) kin becomes a mythologized narrative providing a historical common denominator of passage, victimization, and assimilation. As

white students often tell it, blacks can point to the middle passage and slavery; Japanese and Chinese can speak of internment and forced labour, respectively; and whites have the immigrant experience. In a sense, past group victimization or hardship is part of the American experience; young whites, when confronted by real or perceived charges of racism, can point to the mistreatment of their older relatives when they were newly arrived immigrants in the United States.

(1997: 8)

Thus, akin to many in the previous generation, some young white ethnics continue to utilise ethnicity as a means by which to rationalise their comparatively privileged status in American society. Ethnicity to individuals belonging to this generation, like the generation that preceded it, symbolises a ‘get out clause’ of last resort that can be unearthed in order to deny that they had in any way benefited from being, so to speak, white.

The question arises, then, as to whether these white ethnic identities can in any way be regarded as ‘symbolic’ or ‘optional’. According to Gallagher’s findings the answer is a categorical ‘no’. In fact, for 68 percent of his sample a white ethnic identity no longer plays any role with regard to their self-identification, and the minority that did disclose an ethnic identity conceded that they were ethnic in name only:

The majority of my respondents reduced their ethnic identity to a list of nations in Europe without the cultural connections. For many whites, citing an ethnic ancestry was culturally analogous to stating that one had been born in California or New Jersey or preferred football over baseball, that is, ethnic ancestry carried little or no cultural weight.

(2003: 148)

To these young white ethnics, ancestry is simply a fact from which they are almost entirely emotionally detached. The ‘option’ exists for ethnicity to be utilised, in name only, as a means by which to deny white privilege but it does not signify an option that involves any affiliation, participation or, indeed, expression. Ethnicity just is. In direct

reference to Waters' findings, Gallagher maintains that the vast majority of his respondents had "undergone such extensive generational, spatial, and cultural assimilation that the "option" to engage in the activities or traditions that forge and give shape to an ethnic identity no longer exists" (2003: 145). From this perspective, the only option that exists for young white ethnics is that of name-dropping a country (or two or three) in response to allegations of white privilege.

Should the options for young white ethnics be significantly reduced, then it is evident that the symbolism embodied within ethnic identities has similarly been purged. With this in mind, it should come as little surprise that Gallagher found that:

For the majority of the white respondents in my study, little is left in the way of ethnic solidarity, ethnic identity, or even symbolic nostalgia for the ethnic traditions of their older kin. When asked to define themselves in ethnic or racial terms (or both), the majority of students labelled themselves as white or Caucasian, ignoring such labels as Italian-American.

(1997: 7-8)

Thus, even in name only, ethnicity does not carry any symbolic attachment akin to that observed by Gans (1979). Yet Gallagher does concur with Gans' view that Marcus Lee Hansen's assertion that "what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember" (1987 [1937]: 15) did not in any way address what would transpire following the supposed third-generation return. In fact, Gallagher suggests that Hansen's classic immigration maxim should be revised for the twenty-first century in the form of "What the grandson wished to remember, the great-great-granddaughter has never been told" (2003: 148). For these young whites on the eve of the twenty-first century, ethnic identities, even in symbolic or optional form, had all but ceased to exist.

Some circumstantial evidence of this can be found within the data pertaining to the U.S. Censuses conducted in 1990 and 2000. Indeed, the number of Americans identifying their ethnic descent as "European" experienced a three-fold increase between 1990 and 2000. More significant, however, is the fact that those identifying their ancestry only as

“White” also more than doubled in the decade flanked by the two censuses. This is, to reiterate once again, merely circumstantial evidence since it is entirely conceivable that the respective increases did not account for a single American of southern or eastern European descent. Without a doubt, the increases could in theory be wholly attributable to older-stock whites that had been caught up in the ethnic fervour of the 1960s and 1970s and had embraced ethnic identities only to abandon them at a later date. In actual fact, those identifying as “English,” “German,” and “Irish” declined by over 20 percent respectively between 1990 and 2000.

Yet these increases and decreases are significant in that they indicate a change in the attractiveness and meaningfulness of being simply “white.” At a time when the rate of non-white immigration to the United States is exponentially higher than that of white immigration, the increases in those claiming their ancestry to be “European” or “White” cannot, with absolute certainty, be attributed to birth-rates and new immigrants alone. Indeed, the fact that more than 8 million fewer Americans decided in 2000 that they were no longer Irish could provide a vital clue to the continuing decline of other white ethnic identities. The Irish had arrived en masse not long before those from southern and eastern Europe and had also been distinguished by their predominantly non-Protestant faith. The case of Irish Americans may thus provide the template upon which to predict the future decline of southern and eastern European symbolic and optional identities. In light of claims that whites will become a minority in the United States by 2050, such findings suggest that it is race—i.e. whiteness—that will, in place of national-origin identities, become the dominant mode of identification among the descendants of white ethnic immigrants.

## Chapter 7 - Conclusion

This thesis embodies, to some extent, a journey through history. However, it is an analytical journey that encompasses the wide variety of factors, forces, and events that have affected white ethnic groups and identities in the years since southern and eastern Europeans first began arriving en masse in the 1880s. These factors, forces, and events that shaped white ethnicities throughout much of the twentieth century will undoubtedly have a decisive bearing on their future and, as a result, upon the validity of the fundamental principle proposed by straight-line assimilation theory.

As indicated within the title of this thesis, race had a decisive impact upon both the experiences and the prospects of southern and eastern European ethnic groups, particularly in view of the fact that the American society into which they disembarked during the period of high immigration was one markedly fractured by racial division and racist dogma. The victory of the North in the American Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865 may have legally brought over two centuries of black chattel enslavement to an end, but the legacy of slavery and the attitudes and social divisions it had engendered was a continuing reality. Indeed, the rigour with which segregation was enforced following emancipation is underlined by prohibitions on inter-racial marriage and the 'one-drop rule' which unconditionally classified anyone with even the slightest trace of black ancestry as legally black. The arrest of Homer Plessy, who was one-eighth black, or 'octoroon' according to the 1890 U.S. Census, for sitting in a 'whites only' rail compartment epitomises the stringency by which racial segregation was applied in spite of the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteeing equal protection of the law. Plessy's unsuccessful U.S. Supreme Court challenge in 1892, based upon the premise that his arrest violated his rights in accordance with the Constitution, showcased that the authorities had little intention of promoting racial integration.

At the same time, the nation's indigenous population was faring little better. The 1800s had witnessed a number of Indian Wars and legislation aimed at relocating Indian tribes



to the West, and the passing of the Indian Appropriations Act in 1851 had established reservations in order to effectively oust Native Americans from broader society. The Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 marked the end of Native American armed resistance to the state's territorial expansion, but the nation's first inhabitants continued to be denied citizenship rights until 1924. Yet another group that can, to some extent, be considered indigenous is that of Mexicans that had effectively become Americans following the Mexican-American War. Under the conditions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Mexicans were defined as "white" and accorded the political status of "free white person," but the reality was de facto segregation. Furthermore, although language rights had been guaranteed under the Treaty, legislative acts such as that requiring the declaration of property-ownership in English had disenfranchised and marginalised much of this predominantly Spanish-speaking populace.

Chinese immigrants that had arrived during the Gold Rush had been the first significant non-white voluntary immigrant group. Not only were they considered non-assimilable and barred from naturalising but also, by the time southern and eastern European immigrants began arriving in sizeable numbers, had been exclusively subjected to a number of taxes and other punitive measures as well as mounting outbreaks of anti-Chinese violence that eventually led to a total ban on further immigration from China. The Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Indian immigrants also had the misfortune of being both non-white as well as relative newcomers at a time when 'scientific racism' was gaining in popularity. The *Ozawa* and *Thind* U.S. Supreme Court rulings of 1922 made clear that the authorities had no desire to make Americans out of Asian immigrants, and the *Thind* ruling in particular proved that the right to naturalise was based not on accepted anthropology but, rather, on colour.

Thus, by the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries when southern and eastern European immigrants were pouring through Ellis Island, it had been made abundantly clear, as argued in Chapter 2, that the archetypal American was of north-western European descent and, preferably, Protestant. Indeed, the Irish had been the first prominent European group to encounter the chauvinism of the native white population

when substantial numbers had arrived in America following the Irish potato famine of the mid-nineteenth century. The predominantly Catholic Irish immigrants were typically cast as alcoholic papists and societal prejudice toward them is embodied in the prevalence of such signs as “Help Wanted - No Irish” as well as in the rise of the Native American, or Know Nothing, Party. With the Irish precedent in mind, the largely Catholic and Jewish southern and eastern European immigrants were not, unsurprisingly, received with open arms. The new immigrants were undoubtedly regarded as intrinsically inferior to the native white population to the extent that they were considered racially distinct. Despite being legally classified as ‘whites’, the acquittal of Jim Rollins in 1922 for the crime of miscegenation demonstrates that the white racial category was not a homogeneous whole and was, rather, characterised by a substantial degree of elasticity that, to all intents and purposes, exemplified a caste system.

As a result of nativist hostility, over and above their newcomer-status, white ethnic groups typically dwelled together with compatriots in ethnic ghettos that exemplified Horace Kallen’s cultural pluralist vision. Kallen’s brand of cultural pluralism had, however, long been an American reality. The existence of Indian reservations, black ghettos, Chinatowns and Spanish-speaking districts in the Southwest had already made clear that *E Pluribus Unum* was not universally applicable. Nevertheless, cultural pluralism was a fact of life among the new immigrants and white ethnic varieties materialised by way of Little Italys, Polonias, and Jewish Quarters.

However, although the new immigrants were considered racially distinct and were typically referred to as ‘white races’, they undoubtedly benefited from being accorded the first term in that classification—‘white’. Hence, despite palpable physical and cultural dissimilarities vis-à-vis native whites, immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were considered to be at least marginally white. This ‘white’ status, which was decisively bolstered by their yet greater physical contrast to non-whites, would be the key to their gradual incorporation into the mainstream.

However, gradual incorporation did not suit the U.S. authorities. The new immigrants

may have been classified as whites but they were not quite white enough to be accepted as they were. As a result, as examined in Chapter 3, Americanization campaigns were launched to encourage adult immigrants to shed their foreign traits and embrace the 'American Way'. Adult education became a booming industry, and many employers limited work-related perks and benefits to those attending English language classes and to those that had taken steps toward naturalisation. The departure of thousands of white ethnics to fight for their homelands during the First World War may have led Randolph Bourne to conclude that the Americanization of white ethnics had failed and that the United States ought to embrace his concept of trans-nationality, but to the authorities it merely signalled that more needed to be done. As a result, the heat was turned up on the children of immigrants within the public school system by way of dissuading them from speaking any language but English and counteracting ethnic traits learned in the home in order to ensure that young white ethnics, unlike many of their parents, identified exclusively with the United States.

Americanization was undoubtedly bolstered by popular notions of America being a melting pot of nationalities. Had Zangwill's play first been staged in Europe rather than in America it may well have been received very differently, but the fact is that Zangwill's depiction of the United States as God's crucible within which historic enmities evaporated was well-received by many above and beyond the play's actual theatre audiences. The suggestion that even Jews and Gentiles could intermingle and intermarry and become true blue Americans was an exceedingly popular one. Whether those that embraced melting pot symbolism envisaged it to entail cultural and/or biological assimilation, or whether it in fact merely camouflaged Anglo-conformity and Americanization, is beside the point. Randolph Bourne may have proposed a dynamic interaction whereby both the immigrants and the host society would be altered, but it is highly unlikely that native whites ever aspired to learn from or to be influenced in any way by the customs and mores of the new immigrants. However, the most important aspect of the melting pot metaphor is that it included white ethnics, particularly in view of the fact that non-whites, by and large, had no part to play in it whatsoever.

White ethnic melting undoubtedly did take place within the American pot, both culturally and biologically, and was definitively assisted by the passing of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act which drastically curtailed further immigration from southern and eastern Europe. This immigration hiatus cut short a continuous stream of immigrants and led to the stabilisation, Americanization, and upward mobility of those white ethnics already settled in the United States. Had the Act not been passed and had later-generation white ethnics had a larger pool of more recent immigrants to consider for marriage, then Americanization may have been a slower process. But the 1924 immigration act severed the replenishing mechanism of ethnic communities and Americanization subsequently took place relatively uncontested. The result was the expansion of the higher echelons of whiteness to incorporate those that had previously been considered distinct 'white races'.

The Johnson-Reed Act is also crucial in that it is likely to have had an impact upon the formulation of straight-line assimilation theory. By the 1940s, over a decade had passed since the quotas had been implemented and it would have certainly been apparent to sociologists at the time that white ethnics were becoming, so to speak, progressively 'less ethnic' with each successive generation. That is not to say that assimilation, and therefore de-ethnicization, would not have taken place had the act not been passed, but the act did, to all intents and purposes, detach white ethnics from the cultures of their ancestral homelands and expedited the Americanization process. In short, the straight line was still straight but the dots along it, representing the progressive stages of assimilation, would have been pushed closer together as a result of the cultural isolation of white ethnic groups in America.

Assimilation itself, however, would come to be called into question following the events of the 1960s and 1970s which, on the surface at least, seemed to turn straight-line assimilation theory on its head. Amid racial-minority activism and campaigns for Black-, Red-, Brown-, and Yellow Power, emerged an outpouring of white ethnic activity at the hands of those presumed to have been successfully assimilated and untouched by foreignness. Many whose parents and grandparents had longed to be accepted as Americans began rejecting their comparatively secure American identities and rushed to

embrace and to assert ones hyphenated to the national origins of their immigrant forebears. White ethnic themes rapidly became highly conspicuous in the media and culture industries, were adopted by corporate marketing and merchandising machines, and became the focus of new publications, organisations, and artistic productions.

The roots of this white ethnic upsurge are certainly wide and varied, yet a key trigger of this sudden surge in white ethnic interests was undoubtedly the civil rights movement. Demands for equality had highlighted the past and present victimisation of blacks and had inexorably drawn attention to the perpetrators of their historic exploitation and oppression. As the movement began to gather momentum in the 1960s, fingers were increasingly being pointed at whites in general, and whiteness itself transformed from being a positive marker of privilege to being the badge of the oppressor. For many whites of southern and eastern European descent, as argued in Chapter 4, ethnicity undoubtedly signified a means by which to effectively disassociate from mainstream whiteness and deflect the finger-pointing. By embracing identities linked to immigrant forebears, white ethnics could highlight the prejudice once faced by them and claim to have been similarly marginalised, thereby disassociating from white privilege and underlining an underdog status comparable to that of non-whites. Needless to say, many white ethnics may have genuinely sympathised with the black cause, but feelings of sympathy were not enough to detract from perceptions of skin privilege. By actively asserting European national-origin identities, later-generation white ethnics could at once create a distinction between themselves and the broader white society that had for so long disenfranchised blacks and other non-whites.

However, the skin privilege that white ethnics had previously enjoyed, and which had enabled them to prosper vis-à-vis non-whites, had also become a significant disadvantage in certain quarters. The passing of civil rights legislation and the implementation of affirmative action policies aimed at promoting minority representation had resulted in non-whites being given preference over whites in a variety of spheres, and white resentment toward such attempts to correct the effects of past and present discrimination was widespread. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, had not only prohibited racial

discrimination but had also outlawed discrimination on the basis of religion, sex, and national origin. Thus, those whites in a position to do so, i.e. those close enough to the point of immigration to be aware of their comparatively recent immigrant descent, could seize upon their ethnic backgrounds and similarly claim minority status in order to compete for positions that were increasingly being granted to non-white applicants over whites. In effect, it paid to belong to a minority group, and mobilising around southern and eastern European origins gave white ethnics a competitive advantage over unhyphenated whites and enabled them to compete with non-whites within the realm of affirmative action policies. The seemingly renewed belief in primordialism epitomised instrumentalism in practice.

Racism also cannot be overlooked entirely as having been a contributing factor to the surge in white ethnic activities and identities in the 1960s and 1970s. Although such writers as Novak and Glazer and Moynihan have sought to play down allegations that racism played a role, it is evident that at least some elements of racism did. After all, white ethnics had, as underlined in Chapter 2, historically secured their inclusion within the white racial category by adopting prevailing white attitudes toward non-whites, and particularly toward blacks. Such attitudes are not easily abandoned, and hence for those white ethnics that had a visceral hatred of blacks and who were therefore unsympathetic toward their plight as the racial underclass, black socio-economic advancement would have been considerably unnerving. Ethnicity provided the means by which to stem that which was undoubtedly perceived by many to be a rising tide of black privilege. By asserting white ethnicities and thereby claiming to have been similarly discriminated against, white ethnic groups inexorably made themselves comparable to other minority groups such as blacks. Any such comparison, however, could only serve to showcase both their assimilability and their relative prosperity vis-à-vis blacks. In effect, ethnicity could be utilised by white ethnics in order to rearticulate their white privilege and to flaunt their socio-economic superiority over other, predominantly non-white, minority groups.

The black movement may have instigated the white ethnic movement, as it had the other

colour-coded campaigns, but there were a number of additional developments during this period that undoubtedly added fuel to the fire. Despondency with regard to the handling of the U.S. military campaign in Vietnam, hand in hand with political scandals and feelings of homogenisation and atomisation that had been steadily rising in intensity in the post-war period, all converged alongside the campaign for civil rights to produce a highly tense and volatile socio-political climate. A lack of confidence in the establishment led to an explosion of anti-central expressions as mainstream values and goals came to be widely questioned. Blacks had, of course, been the first to fundamentally challenge on a large scale the legitimacy and sincerity of American ideals, and other racial minorities had promptly followed suit. But the widespread disenchantment came to encompass far more than just race-based grievances, and a variety of other movements similarly emerged in response to feelings of dejection and disaffection across-the-board. The collapse of the mainstream and, therefore, that of the melting pot symbol may have encouraged many white ethnics to fall back upon and to embrace their ethnic ancestries, but ethnicity was certainly not the only available option. Movements campaigning for women's rights, gay rights, and for the protection of animals and the environment had also emerged amid the turmoil. For those seeking a cause with which to identify, myriad interest groups had come into existence embodying anti-central havens of deeper meaning and greater purpose. For some white ethnics gender equality may have been of overriding importance, and for others it may have been the environment. But for many it was ethnicity that proved most alluring and which consequently led to a surge in white ethnic concerns. It was, however, as argued in Chapter 4, simply one of many possible options available to white ethnics in search of personal location amid the upheavals of the time.

However, this particular option, i.e. the ethnic one, was one that came to be endorsed by the state machinery itself. The Ethnic Heritage Studies Programme Act, passed in 1972, changed the face of public education and paved the way for the widespread recognition and promotion of ethnicity within the school system. By this time, two U.S. presidents, Kennedy and Nixon, had already engaged in 'return' visits to their immigrant ancestors' country of origin and had been enthusiastically received and welcomed as sons that had

merely been away on sabbatical. In fact, on his inauguration day in January 1961, Kennedy sent a recorded message to the people of New Ross pledging to visit his great-grandfather's hometown. If the nation's First Citizen could reveal such trans-national ties, then embracing white ethnic identities surely could not be 'un-American'.

It is the state's role with regard to the restoration of Ellis Island that epitomises the establishment's endorsement of ethnicity, or, at least, of white ethnicities. Tours of the derelict island began in 1976, and the nation's bicentenary undoubtedly prompted many to retrace their family histories in America. Approval by Congress for the use of public funds toward restoring the island underlined the state's recognition of the millions of white ethnics that had disembarked there during the period of high immigration. The significance of this lies in the fact that, to this day, first-time visitors to New York City may or may not drop in on the Museum of African American History and Arts or the National Museum of the American Indian, but will almost certainly visit the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Museum, the latter being predominantly a symbol of the significance white ethnic immigration to the United States.

All the events pertaining to the white ethnic movement, however, took place at a time when the world as a whole was becoming increasingly globalised and interconnected. The 1960s and 1970s were undoubtedly a turbulent period in America, but it was also one in which great changes were taking place in various other parts of the world as colonial rulers began granting independence to their territories abroad. Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to Ghana in 1957 underlines the influence of black independence abroad upon his own hopes with regard to improving the condition of American blacks, and ethnicity in general had become a somewhat new and highly potent social force around the world both among indigenous groups and migrant communities. In the United States, however, the overall impact of the prominence given to white ethnicities was that it effectively eclipsed the experiences of non-whites. Once ethnicity was embraced by whites, it had effectively become democratised and subsequently came to overshadow the uniqueness of the black experience. The commotion that accompanied assertions of Black Pride came to be outshone by celebrations of white ethnicity.



However, the question arises as to just how ethnic those claiming to be unmeltable were, and Chapter 5 examined a number of key determinants with regard to the progressive whitening of white ethnics and, therefore, the limitations on the prospect of an ethnic revival. The significance of generational distance lies in the fact that it was not immigrants that were asserting ethnic identities fundamentally rooted in their countries of birth but, rather, predominantly members of the American-born generations that were, for the most part, acquainted with little beyond the realms of American culture. Studies have shown that first-generation immigrants had remained rooted in their ethnic cultures and had adapted to the host society as was necessary to get by. Their second generation offspring were typically marginalised, caught between the foreign value systems of their parents and the mainstream values and Americanizing forces they were exposed to at school and in society at large. As a result of the two generations effectively belonging to two different worlds, the relationship between the first and second generations was often tenuous and culturally fractured. Because of this, members of the third generation, the grandchildren of immigrants, were presumed to be the first to be wholly American and untouched by foreign ways. It was this generation that was seemingly ‘returning’ to their immigrant roots in the 1960s and 1970s and declaring that they were more than just plain old Americans. This does, on the face of it, appear to substantiate Marcus Lee Hansen’s “principle of third generation interest,” but even Hansen could not possibly have foreseen the chance convergence of so many different factors that would simultaneously play out by the time the third generation of southern and eastern European origin had reached maturity. Nevertheless, one point on which Hansen was almost certainly correct was his belief that the third generation could comfortably express an interest in the immigrant cultures of their grandparents largely because they are, for the most part, untouched by it.

A key indicator of the progressive assimilation that white ethnics had undergone is language use, despite the fact that in some cases it can be entirely immaterial to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries. But, equally, in some cases it can be significantly telling. Southern and eastern European languages, as Joshua Fishman’s study of mother tongues has shown, had been significantly eroded with each successive generation and white ethnic groups had typically been subjected to substantial cross-generational

language loss. Although this by itself is not conclusive proof that ethnicity had lessened in importance, if ethnicity had been of overriding importance then one would expect the mother tongue associated with that respective background to have correspondingly been a priority, particularly in the absence of any legal or official pressure to abandon it. But this had not been the case, and a substantial segment of ethnic revivalists were monolingual English-speakers. In this case, not only does linguistic assimilation suggest that substantial cultural assimilation had also taken place but also implies that those ‘returning’ to ethnicity were doing so from a largely American perspective. That is to say, those claiming to be Italian-American or Polish-American were certainly more American than Italian or Polish, and the lack of a linguistic boundary distinguishing them from unhyphenated whites undoubtedly inhibited the extent to which later-generation white ethnics could claim to be distinct, particularly given that language use is one of the primary markers distinguishing an “us” from a “them.”

White ethnicities had also been significantly eroded by upward mobility, particularly as a result of the post-war economic boom. Whereas once being ethnic had been synonymous with being working class, this correlation had begun to unravel at a rapid rate. As white ethnic groups climbed up the socio-economic ladder, they correspondingly became less distinct vis-à-vis older stock whites and, as Gans has pointed out, became progressively whiter the better off they became. White ethnics were no longer limited to blue-collar jobs, and increasing numbers had gained employment in the white-collar sector and were pursuing higher education and entering the middle-class mainstream professions. When compared to most non-white groups, Greeley’s claim of an ‘ethnic miracle’ is undoubtedly an accurate one.

Along with upward mobility, however, came suburbanization. First-generation immigrants had, of course, typically dwelled together within urban villages largely set apart from the mainstream. The proximity between ethnicity and home-life effectively enabled white ethnics to keep alive their values and customs within the confines of these ethnic ghettos. It also made possible the socialisation of the young within environments in which ethnicity was virtually omnipresent. Suburbanization thus profoundly affected

this close relationship as upwardly mobile white ethnics increasingly departed the ethnic districts for the more heterogeneous suburbs. Not only did the move to the suburbs physically detach them from these areas of high ethnic concentration, but it also exposed them to more diverse social networks, markets, and influences. At one time even newly-weds did not move very far from the family home, but suburbanization “destroyed the ethnic neighbourhoods [to the extent that they] no longer exist as self-perpetuating enclaves but (where they have partially survived) as ethnic theme parks” (Candeloro, 1992: 186). Life in middle-class suburbia was considerably different to the working-class ethnic neighbourhoods of old.

However, it is intermarriage that, as argued in Chapter 5, represents the ultimate gauge of assimilation. White ethnics may have encountered significant disdain on the part of their hosts upon arrival, but this had progressively declined and by the post-war period inter-ethnic marriage had become somewhat commonplace. White ethnics undoubtedly benefited from their comparative whiteness vis-à-vis non-whites on the subject of marriage, and would without question have been preferred over any non-white potential partner. Thus, by the time of the ethnic upsurge, distinctions between whites had very nearly ceased to be a factor in considerations of marriage, indicating that the boundaries between whites and white ethnics had become for the most part immaterial. Evidence suggests that intermarriage weakens the ethnic attachments of the intermarried, and correspondingly has a decisive effect upon the ethnic identifications of their mixed offspring. Moreover, the 1980 U.S. Census reveals that 75 percent of marriages among whites involved the traversing of at least one ethnic boundary and this suggests that many that proudly affirmed ethnic identities during the 1960s and 1970s were either intermarried, were the offspring of the intermarried or, despite claiming to be unmeltable, themselves went on to intermarry.

Since Chapter 5 set out to prove that the decline in the structural significance of white ethnicities hindered the prospect of a return or revival of ethnicity, the question arose as to what the outbursts of primordialist sentiment in the 1960s and 1970s actually yielded. According to Michael Novak, this period gave rise to a ‘new ethnicity’ which, first and

foremost, involved the freedom to shun mainstream conformity. However, this new ethnicity did not include speaking a foreign language, living in an ethnic neighbourhood, or even belonging to an ethnic organisation. Rather, it merely involved the desire to not be like everyone else, a sense of being condescended to, and a growing self-confidence. From an objective perspective, then, the new ethnicity was not very ethnic at all. In fact, many features that Novak claims the new ethnicity encompassed are essentially subjective feelings that were certainly not limited to white ethnics. At a time when the mainstream was patently fragmenting, white ethnics were certainly not alone in their disaffection and the supposedly 'new' ethnicity does not seem to have been rooted in anything substantive.

As alluded to in Chapter 6, Herbert Gans was undoubtedly more attuned to the events of the period when he suggested that there had not been an ethnic revival of any sort, and that the observable increase in white ethnic activity and assertiveness was merely symbolic and embodied far more style than substance. From his standpoint, later-generation white ethnics that were suddenly expressing themselves in highly visible ways were engaging in activities that, in contrast to the immigrant generation, were essentially voluntary and did not in any way impact upon their day-to-day lives in the mainstream. Because of this, ethnicity was essentially a leisure-time activity that could be expressed when convenient and, therefore, disregarded when not. Moreover, the ethnic activities and expressions were highly individualised and carefully chosen to be highly conspicuous without requiring significant commitments of time and effort. Ethnicity did not in any way encroach upon their otherwise non-ethnic lives and merely advanced the feeling of being ethnic as opposed to being indicative of active and meaningful group membership. Needless to say, Gans' interpretation of the events of the time is an exceedingly cynical one, yet it is nonetheless far more fathomable than the emotional rhetoric that such ethnic spokesmen as Novak churned out.

Gans' views were, in the main, merely observational and it was Mary C. Waters that set out to verify whether his position was indeed a valid one. Waters' study is revealing to say the least, and not only did she find that Gans' observations were substantiated and

that white ethnic identities are seemingly voluntary, intermittent and superficial, but also that white ethnics have a wide array of choice on matters of ethnicity—not only with regard to the fundamental choice of whether to identify with an ethnic background or not but also how to express it, when to express it, and to whom to express it. Needless to say, such freedom of choice is contrary to popular perceptions of ethnicity being primordial and unchangeable, but Waters nevertheless confirms Gans' suspicions that white ethnics are, for the most part, part-time ethnics. Moreover, white ethnic identities, based on Waters' findings, do not appear to serve as any kind of bond or link to a wider ethnic collective and merely serve as a means by which to express individuality and to be different from other whites. There are no group boundaries here, only individual ones that can be raised and lowered at will.

However, as underlined in Chapter 6, the neo-conservatism of the 1980s cannot be overlooked as having had a decisive impact upon matters pertaining to white ethnicities, and must be taken into account with regard to both Gans' observations and Waters' findings. Gans' standpoint emerged as a result of his observations of white ethnic activity in the 1970s prior to the inauguration of what came to be two successive Republican administrations under Reagan. Waters' study, on the other hand, was conducted at a time when the Reagan administration was in full swing. The dismantling of civil rights legislation such as affirmative action policies, and Reagan's re-emphasis on individualism effectively rearticulated racial ideology and, in doing so, rationalised white privilege. The question arises, then, as to whether white ethnicities would have become less symbolic and consequently more substantive, as well as whether they would have become less optional and more decisive, in the absence of the rise of neo-conservatism in the 1980s. This period cemented racial politics to the extent that not being black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American made one inescapably white, and class interests were primarily defined in racial, and not ethnic, terms. Had this not transpired, then white ethnicities could potentially have developed actual group boundaries. Needless to say, this is an unanswerable question but may nevertheless embody a distinct possibility.

Alba's suggestion that White America is undergoing a transformation and that a new

ethnic group encompassing all whose ancestors arrived from anywhere in Europe certainly leans toward validating straight-line assimilation. Although his notion of a 'new' European ethnic group is questionable on the basis that there is little to differentiate it from race-based whiteness, the mere possibility of what he suggests, based on his study, is evidence of the waning importance of ethnicity in the lives of later-generation white ethnics to the extent that they could at some point become unhyphenated whites. Gallagher's study categorically lends weight to both straight-line theory and Park's race relations cycle, as many of his subjects identified themselves as 'white' or 'Caucasian' even when given the option to identify ethnically. What this suggests is that for the post-Reagan younger generation, it is their racial whiteness that defines them and not the fact that their immigrant ancestors arrived in the United States a mere century ago. It is, after all, far easier for the young to blend into a long-standing white population than to continue identifying with an ethnic background in order to please parents and grandparents.

As argued throughout this thesis, the racial divisions that marked the American society to which white ethnics immigrated had a categorical impact upon their socio-economic progression and gradual incorporation into the mainstream, and therefore the future standing of white ethnicities will similarly be determined by the politics of the racial pentagon within which they are unreservedly white. After all, should other whites regard one as being as white as they, and should non-whites perceive one to be utterly white, then claiming to be of a particular white ethnic background undoubtedly epitomises an uphill struggle that has little chance of success. This reality is underlined by Chris Rock, the African American comedian and, some would say, astute social commentator who declared in reference to black perceptions of white ethnic assertions that "We don't have time to dice white people up into little groups" (*The Guardian*, 2008). It is the whiteness of white ethnics that mattered most when they arrived, and it remains the decisive factor within the racial pentagon of today.

The 1960s and 1970s may have engendered a renewed belief in primordialism, but in reality this belief, at least among white ethnics, did not lead to action. In view of this, the

evidence suggests that the ethnic upsurge of the 1960s and 1970s was in fact a ‘wave’ or ‘bump’ that was ultimately straightened out, but that fact itself does not mean that straight-line theory has been, or will be, re-embraced.. Moreover, it is also clear that white ethnic assertions at the time also embodied some degree of instrumentalism, and this may continue to play a part in the lives of some white ethnics that may wish to mention a southern or eastern European nation or two when interacting with non-whites. Ethnicity is kept in reserve—just in case—but for the most part does not, and most likely will not, play a significant role in the lives of those Americans that are essentially defined by their race-based whiteness.

Straight-line theory may not be an endearing notion, but it is nonetheless an undeniable reality. Gans draws attention to the fact that, right up until the late-1970s, straight-line theory reigned supreme in considerations of ethnicity but that “Today, straight-line theory is not only no longer dominant, but it is thought to be empirically invalid as well as being normatively undesirable” (1995: 453). Yet upon consideration of both the rate and the pattern of white ethnic advancement during the course of the twentieth century, it is clear that Gans is justified in saying that:

I have never been persuaded by this total rejection of straight line theory. While people *can* construct or invent their own ethnicity, the materials which they use in doing so have to come from what they know about their own or another ethnicity. Moreover, since acculturation and assimilation continue to take place, what they know differs from what their parents or other ancestors knew. It is therefore unlikely, if not impossible, for them to reconstruct even pale imitations of the ethnic groups or cultures of their immigrant ancestors, except perhaps as museum exhibits, or as events at an ethnic festival.

(1995: 453, original italics)

The evidence suggests that straight-line theory does, and will, hold in the long-run, largely because there are too many irreversible factors at play—generational distance, intermarriage, etc—for ethnicity to be revived or returned to in any practical or meaningful sense. That is not to say that there are not, and will not continue to be,

pockets of white ethnics that practice endogamy and/or maintain purely symbolic identities. But with each successive generation from the point of immigration, and with ever-increasing rates of inter-ethnic marriage—now the norm rather than the exception—straight-line assimilation as pertaining to white ethnics cannot, as Robert Park asserted, be halted or reversed. The events of the 1960s and 1970s may have slowed it down in a limited sense, but the straight line continues to head in the same direction even if the dots along it that represent the gradual abandonment of ethnicity or, indeed, of symbolic or optional ethnicity, are marginally further apart. There is also little reason to doubt that more recent immigrants from Europe will also, in the long run, be subjected to similar conditions despite the fact that compared to its status just a few decades ago ethnicity has become positively fashionable. The trans-national connections and identities brought about by globalisation may temporarily retard the rate of white ethnic abandonment but cannot, at any rate, blockade it.

In view of the past and present racial framework in American society, it is thus abundantly clear that white ethnicities simply cannot compete, in the mid- to long-run with the potency, and historic significance, of race. That does not mean, however, that the idea of assimilation will become any more acceptable to those possessing a degree of ethnic memory. To many the term may conjure up images of ‘The Borg’ in Gene Rodenberry’s science fiction series *Star Trek*, who travel throughout the universe assimilating other species into an automated collective. However, in the case of white ethnicities in the United States, The Borg’s catchphrase “You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile” is without doubt a fitting one.



## Bibliography

- Abramson, Harold J. (1981) 'Assimilation and Pluralism' in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups*, pp. 150-160, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Ager, Dennis (1997) *Language, Community and the State*, Exeter: Intellect Ltd
- Agnew, J.C. and Rosenzweig, R. (eds) (2002) *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Alba, Richard D. (ed) (1988) *Ethnicity and Race in the U.S.A.: Toward the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Routledge
- Alba, Richard D. (1990) *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Alba, Richard D. and Nee, Victor (1997) 'Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 826-874
- Alba, Richard D. (1999) 'Immigration and the American Realities of Assimilation and Multiculturalism', *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 3-25
- Alba, Richard D. (2000) 'Beyond the Melting Pot 35 Years Later: On the Relevance of a Sociological Classic for the Immigration Metropolis of Today', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 243-279
- Alcoff, Linda (1995) 'Mestizo Identity', Chapter 16 in Bernasconi and Lott (eds) (2000) *The Idea of Race*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Alland, Jr., Alexander (2002) *Race in Mind: IQ, and other racisms*, New York: Palgrave
- Allen, William G., King, Mary and Alcott, Louisa May (2002) *The American Prejudice Against Colour*, Edited with an Introduction by Sarah Elbert, Boston: Northeastern University Press
- American Association of Physical Anthropologists (1996) 'AAPA Statement on Biological Aspects of Race', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol. 101: 569-570
- American Anthropological Association (1998) 'Statement on "Race"', Available at: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm>
- American Sociological Association (2003) *The Importance of Collecting Data and Doing Social Scientific Research on Race*, Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.
- Appiah, Anthony (1990) "'But Would That Still Be Me?" Notes on Gender, "Race," Ethnicity, as sources of "Identity"', *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LXXXVII, No. 10: 493-499
- Auster, Lawrence (1990) *The path to national suicide: an essay on immigration and multiculturalism*, Monterey, VA: American Immigration Control Foundation
- Bailey, Benjamin (2001) 'Dominican-American Ethnic/Racial Identities and United States Social

- Categories', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 677-708
- Baker, John R. (1974) *Race*, London: Oxford University Press
- Banks, James A. and Gay, Geneva (1978) 'Ethnicity in Contemporary American Society: Toward the Development of a Typology', *Ethnicity*, 5, 1978, pp. 238-251
- Banton, Michael (1967) *Race Relations*, London: Tavistock Publications
- Banton, Michael (1977) *The Idea of Race*, London: Tavistock Publications
- Banton, Michael (1979) 'Analytical and folk concepts of race and ethnicity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2: 127-138
- Banton, Michael (1983) *Racial and ethnic competition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Banton, Michael (1987) *Racial Theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Barber, Benjamin R. (1998) *A Passion for Democracy: American Essays*, Chichester: Princeton University Press
- Barker, Chris and Galasinski, Dariusz (2001) *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity*, London: SAGE Publications
- Barnicot, N.A. (1960) 'From Darwin to Mendel', in *Man, Race and Darwin*, Papers Read at a Joint Conference of The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and the Institute of Race Relations, London: Oxford University Press
- Barron, Milton L. (ed) (1972) *The Blending American: Patterns of Inter-marriage*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books
- Barth, Fredrik (1969) 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries' in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, pp. 294-324, New York: New York University Press
- Barth, Fredrik (1995), *Ethnicity and the Concept of Culture*, paper presented to the Conference 'Rethinking Culture', Harvard University, February 23, 1995. Available at: <http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/ponsacs/seminars/Synopses/s95barth.htm>
- Bell, D.V.J. and Logan, R. (1997) 'Communication and Community: Promoting World Citizenship Through Electronic Communications', Chapter 12 in Rotblat (ed) (1997) *World Citizenship: Allegiance to Humanity*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd
- Benedict, Ruth ([1935] 1961), *Patterns of Culture*, London: Routledge
- Berman, Morris (2000) *The Twilight of American Culture*, New York: W.W. Norton
- Bernasconi, Robert and Lott, Tommy L. (eds) (2000) *The Idea of Race*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Bernasconi, Robert (ed) (2001) *Race*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers

- Bernstein, Richard (1994) *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the American Future*, New York: A.A. Knopf
- Biddiss, Michael D. (ed) (1979) *Images of Race*, Leicester: University Press
- Billington, R., Strawbridge, S., Greensides, L., Fitzsimons, A. (1991), *Culture and Society: A Sociology of Culture*, London: Macmillan
- Blum, Lawrence (2002) *"I'm not a racist, but...": the moral quandary of race*, London: Cornell
- Boas, Franz (1911) 'Instability of Human Types', Chapter 10 in R. Bernasconi and T. Lott (eds) *The Idea of Race* (2000), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Boas, Franz (1922) 'Report on an Anthropometric Investigation of the Population of the United States', in Boas *Race, Language and Culture* (1940), New York: Macmillan
- Boas, Franz (1931) 'Race and Progress' in F. Boas, *Race, Language and Culture*, (1940) New York: Macmillan
- Boas, Franz (1940), *Race, Language and Culture*, New York: Macmillan
- Booth, William (1998) 'One Nation, Indivisible: Is It History?', *Washington Post*, February 22, 1998, p. A1
- Bossard, J.H.S. and Boll, E.S. (1972) 'When the Children Come in Interfaith Marriages' in Barron (ed) (1972) *The Blending American: Patterns of Inter-marriage*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books
- Bourne, Randolph S. (1916) 'Trans-National America', Chapter 8, pp. 93-108 in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press
- Brimelow, Peter (1995) *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster*, New York: Random House
- Brubaker, Rogers (2001) 'The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany, and the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 531-548
- Buchanan, Patrick J. (2002) *The Death of the West: how dying populations and immigrant invasions imperil our country and civilization*, New York: Thomas Dunne Books
- Buenker, John D. and Ratner, Lorman A. (1992) *Multiculturalism in the United States: a comparative guide to acculturation and ethnicity*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press
- Bulmer, Martin and Solomos, John (eds) (1999) *Ethnic and Racial Studies Today*, London: Routledge
- Burgess, M. Elaine (1978) 'The resurgence of ethnicity: myth or reality?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 265-285
- Candeloro, D. (1992) 'Italian Americans', Chapter 8 in Buenker and Ratner (Eds) *Multiculturalism in the United States* (1992), Westport, CT: Greenwood Press

- Carlson, Robert A. (1987) *The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest for Conformity*, London: Croom Helm
- Carson, C. (1981) In *Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, London: Harvard University Press
- Carson, Rachel ([1962] 2002) *Silent Spring*, New York: Houghton Mifflin
- Chavez, Ernesto (2002) “*Mi Raza Primero!*” (*My People First!*): *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*, London: University of California Press
- Chun, K.M. and Akutsu, P.D. (2003) ‘Acculturation Among Ethnic Minority Families’, Chapter 5 in Chun et al (2003) *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association
- Chun, K.M., Organista, P.B. and Marin, G. (2003) *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association
- Clausen, Christopher (2000) *Faded Mosaic: The Emergence of Post-Cultural America*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee
- Cohen, Abner (1974) ‘The Lesson of Ethnicity’ in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony P. (1994) ‘Boundaries of consciousness, consciousness of boundaries’ in Vermeulen and Govers (eds) (1994) *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond ‘Ethnic Groups and Boundaries’*, Amsterdam: Spinhuis.
- Collins, Patricia Hill (2001) ‘Like one of the family: race, ethnicity, and the paradox of US national identity’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 3-28
- Comas, Juan (1956 [1952]) ‘Racial Myths’, Part of UNESCO’s series on *The Race Question In Modern Science*, Paris: UNESCO
- Connor, Walker (1978) ‘A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a ....’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 377-400.
- Conway, A. (1968) *The History of the Negro in the United States*, London: The Historical Association
- Coon, Carleton S. (2000) *Culture wars and the global village: a diplomat’s perspective*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books
- Cooper, R. L. and Spolsky, B. (eds) (1991) *The Influence of Language on Culture and Thought: Essays in Honor of Joshua A. Fishman’s Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Corcos, Alain F. (1997) *The Myth of Human Races*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press
- Cornell, Stephen and Hartmann, Douglas (1998) *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, London: Pine Forge Press
- Cowell, F.R. (1959), *Culture: In Private and Public Life*, London: Thames and Hudson

- Crawford, James (2000) *At War with Diversity: US Language Policy in an Age of Anxiety*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd
- D'Andrade, Roy G. (1984), 'Cultural meaning systems', in Shweder and Levine (eds) (1984) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- D'Innocenzo, Michael and Sirefman, Josef P. (eds) (1992) *Immigration and ethnicity: American Society – "melting pot" or "salad bowl"?*, London: Greenwood Press
- D'Souza, Dinesh (1995) *The end of racism: principles for a multiracial society*, London: Free
- Daniels, Jessie (1997) *White Lies: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in White Supremacist Discourse*, New York: Routledge
- Darwin, Charles. R. ([1859] 1951) *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, London: Oxford University Press
- Darwin, Charles R. (1871) *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Vol. 1, London: John Murray
- de Tocqueville, Alexis ([1835] 1998) *Democracy in America*, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited
- Delgado, Richard and Stefancic, Jean (eds) (1997) *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Di Stasi, Lawrence (1997) 'How World War II Iced Italian American Culture' in I. Reed (ed) *MultiAmerica: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace* (1997), New York: Penguin
- Diamond, Jared (1999) *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, New York: Norton
- Dicker, Susan J. (2003) *Languages in America: A Pluralist View*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Dionne, Jr., E.J. (2008) *Souled Out: Faith and Politics after the Religious Right*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Doane, Jr., Ashley W. (1997) 'Dominant Group Ethnicity in the United States: The Role of "Hidden" Ethnicity in Intergroup Relations', *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 375-397
- Doane, Ashley W. and Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo (eds) (2003) *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, New York: Routledge
- Downey, Dennis J. (2000) 'Situating Social Attitudes Toward Cultural Pluralism: Between Culture Wars and Contemporary Racism', *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp. 90-111
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1897) 'The Conservation of Races', Chapter 13 in Bernasconi and Lott (eds) (2000) *The Idea of Race*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Duncan, H.G. (1933) *Immigration and Assimilation*, Boston: Health Social Relations Series
- Dunn, L.C. (1956 [1952]) 'Race and Biology', Part of UNESCO's series on *The Race Question in*

*Modern Science*, Paris: UNESCO

Eagleton, Terry (2000), *The Idea of Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell

Early, Gerald (ed) (1993) *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, New York: Allen Lane

Edwards, John (1985) *Language, Society and Identity*, New York: Basil Blackwell Inc.

Ehrlich, Paul (1968) *The Population Bomb*, Ballantine Books

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (1993) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (1996) 'The epistemological status of the concept of ethnicity', Conference paper, Amsterdam ("The Anthropology of Ethnicity"), December 1993. Published in *Anthropological Notebooks*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1996. Available at: [http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Status\\_of\\_ethnicity.html](http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Status_of_ethnicity.html)

Erikson, Erik H. (1970) 'Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis', *Daedalus*, Vol. 99, No. 4, pp. 730-759

Espiritu, Yen Le (1992) *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press

Farley, R. and Alba, R. (2002) 'The New Second Generation in the United States', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 669-701

Fearon, James D. and Laitin, David D. (2000) *Ordinary Language and External Validity: Specifying Concepts in the Study of Ethnicity*, paper presented at the LiCEP meetings October 20-22, 2000, University of Pennsylvania, Available at: <http://www.stanford.edu/~jfearon/papers/ordlang.doc>

Fenton, Steve (1999) *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture*, London: Macmillan.

Fenton, Steve (2003) *Ethnicity*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Fishman, Joshua A. et al (1966) *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups*, The Hague: Mouton & Co

Fishman, Joshua A. (ed) (1985) *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity*, New York: Mouton Publishers

Fishman, Joshua A. (1989) *Language and Ethnicity: In Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd

Fobanjong, John (2003) *Understanding the Backlash Against Affirmative Action*, New York: Nova Science Publishers

Foner, Nancy (2000) 'Beyond the Melting Pot Three Decades Later: Recent Immigrants and New York's New Ethnic Mixture' in Alba (2000) "Beyond the Melting Pot 35 Years Later: On the Relevance of a Sociological Classic for the Immigration Metropolis of Today," *International Migration Review*, Vol.

34, No. 1, pp. 243-279

- Franklin, S. and McKinnon, S. (eds) (2001) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham & London: Duke University Press
- Friedman, J. (1994) *Cultural Identity & Global Process*, London: SAGE Publications
- Frosch, Mary (ed) (1994) *Coming of Age in America: A Multicultural Anthology*, New York: New Press
- Gallagher, Charles A. (1997) 'White Racial Formation: Into the Twenty-First Century', Chapter 2 in Delgado, R. and Stefancic, J. (eds) (1997) *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Gallagher, Charles A. (2003) 'Playing the White Ethnic Card: Using Ethnic Identity to Deny Contemporary Racism', Chapter 2 in A.W. Doane and E. Bonilla-Silva (eds) (2003) *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, New York: Routledge
- Galton, Francis (1865) 'Hereditary Talent and Character' in Biddiss (ed) (1979) *Images of Race*, Leicester University Press
- Galton, Francis (1904) 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims, in Bernasconi and Lott (eds) (2000) *The Idea of Race*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Gans, Herbert J. (1979) 'Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America' in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, pp. 425-459, New York: New York University Press.
- Gans, Herbert J. (1992) 'Second-generation decline: scenarios for the economic and ethnic futures of the post-1965 American immigrants', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 173-192
- Gans, Herbert J. (1995) 'Epilogue' in 'Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America' in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press
- Gans, Herbert J. (1994) 'Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 577-592
- Geertz, Clifford ([1973] 1993), *The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays*, London: Fontana
- Gergen, Kenneth J. (1967) 'The Significance of Skin Colour in Human Relations', *Daedalus*, Vol. 96, No. 2, pp. 390-406
- Geron, Kim (2003) 'Serve the People: An Exploration of the Asian American Movement' in D.T. Nakanishi and J.S. Lai (eds) (2003) *Asian American Politics: Law, Participation, and Politics*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Gerstle, Gary (2003) 'Pluralism and the War on Terror', *Dissent*, Spring 2003, pp. 31- 38
- Gibson, Kari (2004) 'English Only Court Cases Involving the U.S. Workplace: The Myths of Language Use and the Homogenization of Bilingual Workers' Identities', *Second Language Studies*, 22 (2), Spring 2004, pp. 1-60

- Giddens, Anthony (1997) 'The globalizing of modernity', Chapter 3 in Sreberny Mohammadi et al (eds) (1997) *Media in Global Context: A Reader*, London: Arnold
- Gitlin, Todd (1995) *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars*, New York: Metropolitan Books
- Glass, J., Bengtson, V.L. and Dunham, C.C. (1986) 'Attitude Similarity in Three Generation Families: Socialization, Status Inheritance, or Reciprocal Influence?', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, pp. 685-698
- Glazer, Nathan and Moynihan, Daniel. P. (1970) *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press
- Glazer, Nathan and Moynihan, Daniel P. (eds) (1975) *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Glazer, Nathan (1993) 'Is Assimilation Dead?' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1993, Vol. 530, pp. 122-136
- Glazer, Nathan (1997) *We are all multiculturalists now*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Glazer, Nathan (2000) 'Race and Ethnicity in America', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, Pt. 1, pp. 95-102
- Gleason, Philip (1981) 'American Identity and Americanization' in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1980) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, pp. 31-58, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Gleason, Philip. (1992) *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth Century America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Glenn, Evelyn (2000) 'Citizenship and Inequality: Historical and Global Perspectives, *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, No. 4, 1-20
- Goldberg, David Theo (1992) 'The Semantics of Race', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4: 543-569
- Goldston, R. (1968) *The Negro Revolution*, New York: Signet Books
- Gordon, Albert I. (1964) *Intermarriage: Interfaith Interracial Interethnic*, Boston: Beacon Press
- Gordon, Albert I. (1972) 'Intermarriage: What It Is' in Barron (ed) (1972) *The Blending American: Patterns of Intermarriage*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books
- Gordon, Milton. M. (1964) *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Gossett, Thomas F. (1997) *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Gould, Stephen Jay, Interview with (2003), edited transcript, part of the PBS series on *Race – The Power of an Illusion*, Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/race>



- Grant, Madison (1916) *The Passing of the Great Race*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons
- Greeley, Andrew M. (1974) *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance*, London: Wiley.
- Greenberg, Stanley B. (1995) *Middle Class Dreams: The Politics and Power of the New American Majority*, New York: Times Books
- Greene, Victor (1978) 'Old Ethnic Stereotypes and the New Ethnic Studies', *Ethnicity*, 5, pp. 328-350
- Griswold, Wendy (1994), *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*, California: Pine Forge Press
- Gross, Paul R. (2004) 'Race: no such thing', *The New Criterion*, Vol. 22, No. 8, Available from: <http://www.newcriterion.com/archives/22/04/race-nosuchthing-gross>
- Gudykunst, William B. (ed) (1988) *Language and Ethnic Identity*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Gudykunst, William B. (ed) (2005) *Theorising About Intercultural Communication*, London: Sage Publications
- Guibernau, Montserrat and Rex, John (eds) (1997) *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Hall, John A. and Lindholm, Charles (1999) *Is America Breaking Apart?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Hall, Joan K. (2002) *Teaching and Researching Language and Culture*, London: Pearson Education Ltd
- Hall, John R. and Neitz, Mary Jo (1993), *Culture: Sociological Perspective*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Halter, Marilyn (2000) *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*, New York: Schocken Books
- Hammond, Phillip E. and Warner, Kee (1993) 'Religion and Ethnicity in Late Twentieth-Century America', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 527, pp. 55-66
- Haney-Lopez, Ian (2004) *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Hannaford, Ivan (1996) *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*, Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press
- Hansen, Marcus Lee ([1937] 1987) *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant*, Augustana College Library Occasional Paper No. 16, Rock Island, Illinois.
- Harrington, Mona (1981) 'Loyalties: Dual and Divided', pp. 513-521 in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press
- Harrington, Mona (1982) 'Loyalty: Dual and Divided', Chapter 4 in Walzer et al (1982) *The Politics of Ethnicity*, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

- Harvey, J.C. (1973) *Black Civil Rights During the Johnson Administration*, Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi
- Heller, M. (1999) *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*, New York: Longman
- Herman, E.S. and McChesney, R.W. (1997) *The Global Media: the new missionaries of global capitalism*, London: Cassell
- Herskovits, Melville J. (1963), *Cultural Anthropology: An Abridged Version of Man and His Works*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Higham, John (1975) "Pluralistic Integration as an American Model," in Higham (2001) *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, London: Yale University Press
- Higham, John (2001) *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, London: Yale University Press
- Hing, Bill Ong (1997) *To be an American: cultural pluralism and the rhetoric of assimilation*, New York: New York University Press
- Hinge, George (2004) *Language and Race: Theocritus and the Koine Identity of Ptolemaic Egypt*, Available at: <http://www.georgehinge.com/langu.html>
- Hirsch, E.D. (1987) *Cultural Literacy: What Americans Need to Know*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Hirschman, C. (1983) 'American's Melting Pot Reconsidered', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9, pp. 397-423
- Hirschman, C. (1996) 'Studying Immigrant Adaptation from the 1990 Population Census: Comparisons to the Process of "Becoming American" in Portes (ed) (1996) *The New Second Generation*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Hirschman, C., Alba, R., and Farley, R. (2000) 'The Meaning and Measurement of Race in the U.S. Census: Glimpses into the Future', *Demography*, Vol. 37, No. 3: 381-393
- Hirschman, C. (2003) *The Rise and Fall of the Concept of Race*, Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Population Associations of America in Minneapolis, May 1-3. Available at: <http://faculty.washington.edu/charles/revised%20%20PAA%20May%2027%202003.pdf>
- Hocutt, Max (2002) 'Is the Concept of Race Illegitimate?' *The Independent Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1: 115-128
- Hodgson, Godfrey (2004) *More Equal Than Others: America from Nixon to the New Century*, Oxford: Princeton University Press
- Hoebel, E. Adamson (1956), 'The Nature of Culture', in Shapiro (ed) (1956) *Man, Culture, and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Hoebel, E. Adamson (1958) *Man in the Primitive World: An Introduction to Anthropology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company

- Hollinger, David A. (2000) *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, New York: Basic Books
- Holton, R. (2000) 'Globalization's Cultural Consequences', *American Annals of Political and Social Science*, 570, pp. 140-152
- Howell, Richard W. and Vetter, Harold J. (1976) *Language in Behaviour*, New York: Human Sciences Press
- Hughes, Robert (1994) *Culture of complaint: the fraying of America*, London: Harvill
- Huxley, Julian; Haddon, A.C. and Carr-Saunders, A.M. (1939 [1936]) *We Europeans*, Middlesex: Penguin Books
- Isaac, B. (2003) 'Collective Degradation: Slavery and the Construction of Race', paper delivered at the Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Gilder Lehrman Centre International Conference at Yale University, November 7-8, 2003, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, Available at: <http://www.yale.edu/glc/events/race/Isaac.pdf>
- Isaacs, Harold R. (1975) *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change*, New York: Harper & Row
- Isajiw, Wsevolod W. (1974) 'Definitions of Ethnicity', *Ethnicity*, 1, 111-124.
- Isajiw, Wsevolod W. (1992) *Definitions and Dimensions of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Framework*, paper presented at "Joint Canada-United States Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity", Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, April 2, 1992. Available at: [http://eprints.utoronto.ca/archive/00000008/01/Def\\_DimofEthnicity.pdf](http://eprints.utoronto.ca/archive/00000008/01/Def_DimofEthnicity.pdf)
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye (1998) *Whiteness of a Different Colour: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, London: Harvard University Press
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye (2002) 'Hyphen Nation: Ethnicity in American Intellectual and Political Life', Chapter 10, pp. 175-191 in Agnew and Rosenzweig (eds) (2002) *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye (2006) *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press
- Jenkins, Richard (1994) 'Rethinking ethnicity: identity, categorization and power', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 197-223.
- Jenkins, Richard (1996) 'Ethnicity *etcetera*: social anthropological points of view', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 807-822.
- Jenkins, Richard (1997) *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, London: Sage.
- Jenks, Chris (1993), *Culture*, London: Routledge
- Jiobu, Robert M. (1988) *Ethnicity and Assimilation*, New York: State University of New York Press
- Johnson, Walton R. and Warren, D. Michael (eds) (1994) *Inside the Mixed Marriage: Accounts of*

- Changing Attitudes, Patterns, and Perceptions of Cross-Cultural and Interracial Marriages*, London: University Press of America
- Joireman, Sandra Fullerton (2003) *Nationalism and Political Identity*, New York: Continuum
- Joseph, John E. (2004) *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Josephy, Alvin M., Nagel, Joane and Johnson, Troy R. (1999) *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press
- Kallen, Horace M. (1915) 'Democracy versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality' in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press
- Kallen, Horace M. ([1915] 1998) 'Democracy versus the Melting Pot', Chapter II in H.M. Kallen *Culture and Democracy in the United States* ([1924] 1998), New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction
- Kallen, Horace M. ([1924] 1998) *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction
- Kant, Immanuel (1775) 'Of the Different Human Races' in Bernasconi and Lott (eds) (2000) *The Idea of Race*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company
- Kasinitz, P. (2000) 'Beyond the Melting Pot: The Contemporary Relevance of a Classic' in Alba (2000) "Beyond the Melting Pot 35 Years Later: On the Relevance of a Sociological Classic for the Immigration Metropolis of Today," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 243-279
- Kaufmann, Eric P. (2004) *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*, London: Harvard University Press
- Kazal, R. A. (1995) 'Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, Part 2, pp. 437-471
- Keita, S.O.Y. and Kittles, Rick A. (1997) 'The Persistence of Racial Thinking and the Myth of Racial Divergence', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 99, No. 3: 534-544
- Kennedy, John F. ([1958] 1964) *A Nation of Immigrants*, London: Hamish Hamilton
- King, Desmond (2000) *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy*, London: Harvard University Press
- King, Martin Luther (1967) *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, Michigan: Harper & Row
- Kivisto, Peter and Rundblad, Georganne (eds) (2000) *Multiculturalism in the United States: current issues, contemporary voices*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press
- Kivisto, Peter (2002) *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
- Kroeber, A.L. (1943), 'Structure, Function, and Pattern in Biology and Anthropology' in Kroeber (1952) *The Nature of Culture* (1952), London: University of Chicago Press

- Kroeber, A.L. (1949), 'Values as a Subject of Natural Science Inquiry', in Kroeber (1952) *The Nature of Culture*, London: University of Chicago Press
- Kroeber, A.L. (1950), 'A Half-Century of Anthropology' in Kroeber (1952) *The Nature of Culture*, London: University of Chicago Press
- Kroeber, A.L. (1952), *The Nature of Culture*, London: University of Chicago Press
- Kroeber, K.L. and Kluckhohn, Clyde (1952), *Culture: A Critical View of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University
- Kymlicka, Will (1997) 'Ethnicity in the USA' in Guibernau and Rex (eds) (1997) *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Oxford: Polity Press
- Kymlicka, Will (2003) *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Lal, Barbara Ballis (1983), 'Perspective on ethnicity: old wine in new bottles', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 154-173.
- Lambert, Richard D. (1987) 'The Improvement of Foreign Language Competency in the United States', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 490, March 1987: 9-19
- Lehmann, Winfred P. and Jones, Randall L. (1987) 'The Humanistic Basis of Second Language Learning', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 490, March 1987: 186-193
- Leiris, Michael (1956 [1951]), 'Race and Culture' in UNESCO's series on *The Race Question in Modern Science*, Paris: UNESCO
- Leoussi, Athena S. and Grosby, Steven (eds) (2006) *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Levi-Strauss, Claude (1956 [1952]), 'Race and History' in UNESCO's series on *The Race Question in Modern Science*, Paris: UNESCO
- Levi-Strauss, Claude (1985), *The View From Afar*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Levine, Lawrence W. (1996) *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History*, Boston: Beacon Press
- Lewontin, Richard, Interview with (2003), edited transcript, part of the PBS series on *Race – The Power of an Illusion*, Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/race>
- Liebersohn, Stanley (1985) 'Unhyphenated whites in the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 159-180
- Liebersohn, Stanley and Waters, Mary C. (1986) 'Ethnic Groups in Flux: The Changing Ethnic Responses of American Whites', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 487, pp. 79-91
- Lincoln, C. Eric (1967) 'Color and Group Identity in the United States', *Daedalus*, Vol. 96, No. 2: 527-

- Lind, Michael (1995) *The Next American Nation: the new nationalism and the fourth American Revolution*, New York: Free Press
- Little, Kenneth (1956 [1952]) 'Race and Society', Part of UNESCO's series on *The Race Question in Modern Science*, Paris: UNESCO
- Lopez, David and Espiritu, Yen (1990) 'Panethnicity in the United States: a theoretical framework', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 198-224
- Lucy, John A. (1992) *Language diversity and thought: A reformulation of the linguistic relativity hypothesis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Magocsi, Paul R. (1999) *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Malinowski, Bronislaw (1944), *A Scientific Theory of Culture and other essays*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Mann, Arthur (1979) *The One and the Many*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Marks, Jonathan (2000) '98% Alike? (What Our Similarity to Apes Tells Us About Our Understanding of Genetics)', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 12
- Marks, Jonathan (2001) "'We're Going to Tell These People Who They Really Are": Science and Relatedness', in S. Franklin and S. McKinnon (eds) *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, Durham & London: Duke University Press
- Marks, Jonathan, Interview with (2003), edited transcript, part of the PBS series on *Race – The Power of an Illusion*, Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/race>
- McAdam, D. (1982) *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930 1970*, London: University of Chicago Press
- McCready, William C. (1974) 'The Persistence of Ethnic Variation in American Families', Chapter 7 in Greeley (1974) *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance*, London: Wiley
- McCready, William C. (ed) (1983) *Culture, Ethnicity, and Identity*, London: Academic
- McRae, Donald G. (1960) 'Race and Sociology in History and Theory', in *Man, Race and Darwin*, Papers Read at a Joint Conference of The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and the Institute of Race Relations, London: Oxford University Press
- Mead, Margaret (1942) 'We Are All Third Generation', in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, pp. 216-231, New York: New York University
- Mead, Margaret (1964), *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*, Mass.: The Colonial Press
- Melzer, A.M., Weinberger, J., Zinman, M.R. (eds) (1998) *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas

- Merton, R.K. (1972) 'Intermarriage and the Social Structure: Fact and Theory' in Barron (ed) (1972) *The Blending American: Patterns of Intermarriage*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books
- Miller, John J. (1998) *The Unmaking of Americans: How multiculturalism has undermined the assimilation ethic*, New York: Free Press
- Mithun, J.S. (1983) 'The Role of the Family in Acculturation and Assimilation in America: A Psychocultural Dimension', in McCready (ed) (1983) *Culture, Ethnicity, and Identity*, London: Academic
- Montagu, Ashley ([1942] 1997) *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press
- Morning, Ann (2001) 'The racial self-identification of South Asians in the United States', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 61-79
- Morsell, John A. (1973) 'Ethnic Relations of the Future', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1973, Vol. 408, pp. 83-93
- Mukherjee, B. (1997) 'Beyond Multiculturalism: Surviving the Nineties', in Reed (ed) (1997) *MultiAmerica: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace*, New York: Penguin Books
- Munford, Clarence J. (1996) *Race and Reparations: A Black Perspective for the Twenty-First Century*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press
- Munoz, Jr., Carlos (1989) *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, New York: Verso
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1944) *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, New York: Harper
- Nagel, Joane (1994) 'Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture', *Social Problems*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 152-176.
- Nagel, Joane (1995) 'American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 60, pp. 947-965
- Nagel, Joane (1997) *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Nahirny, Vladimir C. and Fishman, Joshua A. (1965) 'American Immigrant Groups: Ethnic Identification and the Problem of Generations', *Sociological Review*, NS 13, pp. 311-326
- Naison, Mark (2006) 'White Ethnics Not Just Innocent Victims in America's Culture Wars', *History News Network*, available at <http://hnn.us/articles/20584.html>
- Nakanishi, Don T. and Lai, James S. (eds) (2003) *Asian American Politics: Law, Participation, and Policy*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Negus, K. (1997) 'Global harmonies and local discords: transnational policies and practices in the European recording industry', Chapter 23 in Sreberny-Mohammadi et al (eds) (1997) *Media in Global Context: A Reader*, London: Arnold

- Niro, Brian (2003) *Race*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Novak, Michael (1981), 'Pluralism: A Humanistic Perspective', in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press
- Novak, Michael (1996) *Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in American Life*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers
- Norton, Bonny (2000) *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd
- O'Connor, Brendon (2004) *A Political History of the American Welfare System: When Ideas Have Consequences*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield
- O'Dowd, Niall (2004) 'Reagan's Irish Roots; from Ballyporeen to the White House', *Irish Voice*, 15/06/2004
- O'McKee, Jesse (1985) *Ethnicity in Contemporary America: A Geographical Appraisal*, Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt
- O'Neil, Daniel J. (1995) 'Arizona: Pro-Choice Success in a Conservative, Republican State' M. Segers and T. Byrnes (eds) *Abortion Politics in American States* (1995), New York: M.E. Sharpe
- Obidinski, Eugene (1978) 'Methodological Considerations in the Definition of Ethnicity', *Ethnicity*, 5, 213-228 (1978).
- Olneck, M.R. and Lazerson, M. (1981) 'Education' in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, New York: Routledge
- Orlando Sentinel Tribune*, April 28, 1993
- Ossorio, Pilar, Interview with (2003), edited transcript, part of the PBS series on *Race –The Power of an Illusion*, Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/race>
- Pack, Robert and Parini, Jay (1994) *American Identities: Contemporary Multicultural Voices*, London: Middlebury College Press
- Papajohn, John C. (1999) *The Hyphenated American: The Hidden Injuries of Culture*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press
- Park, Robert Ezra (1928) 'Human Migration and the Marginal Man', Chapter 10 in Sollors (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press
- Park, Robert Ezra (1950) *Race and Culture*, London: Free Press
- Parillo, Vincent (1994) 'Diversity in America: A Sociohistorical Analysis', *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 523-546



- Parsons, Talcott (1975) 'Some Theoretical Considerations on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity' in Glazer and Moyohnihan (1975) (eds) *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Paulston, C.B. (1994) *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins
- Pavlenko, Aneta and Blackledge, Adrian (eds) (2004) *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Pedraza, Silvia and Rumbaut, Ruben G. (eds) (1996) *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America*, London: Wadsworth
- Perlmutter, Philip (1999) *Legacy of Hate: a short history of ethnic, religious, and racial prejudice in America*, London: M.E. Sharpe
- Pendakur, Krishna and Pendakur, Ravi (2002) 'Language as Both Human Capital and Ethnicity', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 147-177
- Petersen, William (1981) 'Concepts of Ethnicity', in Thernstrom et al (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press
- Phillipson, R. (ed) (2000) *Rights to Language: Equity, Power, and Education: celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc
- Phinney, J.S. (2003) 'Ethnic Identity and Acculturation', Chapter 3 in Chun et al (2003) *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association
- Porter, J.R. and Washington, R.E. (1993) 'Minority Identity and Self-Esteem', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19: 139-61
- Portes, A. and Zhou, M. (1993) 'The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530, pp. 74-96
- Portes, Alejandro (ed) (1996) *The New Second Generation*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Portes, A. and Schaufli, R. (1996) 'Language Acquisition and Loss Among Children of Immigrants' in Pedraza, S. and Rumbaut, R. G. (eds.) (1996) *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America*, London: Wadsworth
- Portes, Alejandro (2000) 'An Enduring Vision: The Melting Pot that Did Happen' in Alba 'Beyond the Melting Pot 35 Years Later: On the Relevance of a Sociological Classic for the Immigration Metropolis of Today', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 243-279
- Portes, A. and Rumbaut, R.G. (2001) 'The Forging of a New America: Lessons for Theory and Policy' in Rumbaut and Portes (eds) (2001) *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- Portes, A. and Hao, L. (2002) 'The price of uniformity: language, family and personality adjustment in the immigrant second generation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 6: 889-912 (24)

- Prentiss, Craig R. (ed) (2003) *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity: An Introduction*, New York: New York University Press
- Preston, P.W. (1997) *Political/Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, London: SAGE Publications
- Pulido, Laura (2006) *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Southern California*, London: University of California Press
- Quian, Z., Blair, S.L. and Ruf, S.D. (2001) 'Asian American Interracial and Interethnic Marriages: Differences by Education and Nativity', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 557-586
- Reed, Ishmael (ed) (1997) *MultiAmerica: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace*, New York: Penguin Books
- Rees, Richard W. (2007) *Shades of Difference: A History of Ethnicity in America*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Reitz, Jeffrey G. and Breton, Raymond (1994) *The Illusion of Difference: Realities of Ethnicity in Canada and the United States*, Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute
- Rex, John (1986) *Race and Ethnicity*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Rex, John (1997) 'The nature of ethnicity in the project of migration' in Guibernau and Rex (eds) (1997) *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Richardson, Michael (2001), *The Experience of Culture*, London: Sage Publications
- Riggs, Fred W. (2002) 'Globalization, Ethnic Diversity, and Nationalism: The Challenge for Democracies', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 581, pp. 35-47
- Roberts, R.E.T. (1994) 'Black-White Intermarriage in the United States' in Johnson and Warren (eds) (1994) *Inside the Mixed Marriage: Accounts of Changing Attitudes, Patterns, and Perceptions of Cross-Cultural and Interracial Marriages*, London: University Press of America
- Robertson, Roland and Khondker, Habib H. (1998) 'Discourses of Globalization: Preliminary Considerations', *International Sociology*, Vol. 13(1), pp. 25-40
- Rodriguez, Clara E. and Cordero-Guzman, Hector (1992) 'Placing race in context', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4: 523-541
- Romano, Dugan (1997) *Intercultural Marriage: Promises and Pitfalls*, Maine: Intercultural Press
- Roosens, Eugeen (1994) 'The primordial nature of origins in migrant ethnicity', Chapter 4 in Vermeulen and Govers (eds) (1994) *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Amsterdam: Spinhuis
- Ropers, Richard H. and Pence, Dan. J. (1995) *American Prejudice: With Liberty and Justice for Some*, New York: Plenum Press
- Rose, Peter I. (1993) "'Of Every Hue and Caste": Race, Immigration, and Perceptions of Pluralism',

- Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1993, Vol. 530, pp. 187-202
- Rose, Steven (2002) 'Steven Rose: The concept of race is biologically meaningless', *The Independent*, January 28, 2002
- Rose, Steven (2004) 'The code that must be cracked', *The Guardian*, January 22, 2004
- Rotblat, Joseph. (ed) (1997) *World Citizenship: Allegiance to Humanity*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd
- Rouse, Roger (1995) 'Questions of Identity: Personhood and collectivity in transnational migration to the United States', *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 351-380
- Rubin, Barry (1995) *Assimilation and its Discontents*, New York: Times Books
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. (1994) 'The Crucible Within: Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem, and Segmented Assimilation Among Children of Immigrants', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 748-794
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. and Portes, A. (eds) (2001) *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- Rupesinghe, K. and Tishkov, V.A. (Eds) (1996) *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press
- Rustin, B (1976) *Strategies For Freedom: The Changing Patterns of Black Protest*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Sabl, Andrew (2002) *Ruling Passions: Political Offices and Democratic Ethics*, Oxford: Princeton University Press
- Salins, Peter D. (1997) *Assimilation American Style: An impassioned defense of immigration and assimilation as the foundation of American greatness and the American Dream*, New York: BasicBooks
- Santisteban, D.A. and Mitrani, V.B. (2003) 'The Influence of Acculturation Processes on the Family', Chapter 6 in Chun et al (2003) *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association
- Sapir, Edward (1964), *Culture, Language and Personality*, edited by David G. Mandelbaum, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Sapir, Edward (1994), *The Psychology of Culture: A Course of Lectures*, Reconstructed and edited by Judith T. Irvine, New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Sarna, Jonathan D. (1978) 'From Immigrants to Ethnics: Toward a New Theory of "Ethnicization"', *Ethnicity*, 5, pp. 370-378
- Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. (1998) *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, New York: W.W. Norton

- Schmidt, Alvin J. (1997) *The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan horse in America*, London: Praeger
- Schmidt, Sr. Ronald (2000) *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Schneider, Louis (1973), 'The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences: Critical and Supplementary Observations' in Schneider and Bonjean (eds) (1973) *The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Schneider, Louis and Bonjean, Charles (eds) (1973), *The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Segers, Mary C. and Byrnes, Timothy A. (eds) (1995) *Abortion Politics in American States*, New York: M.E. Sharpe
- Shapiro, Harry L. (ed) (1956), *Man, Culture, and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Shaw, M. (1997) 'The theoretical challenge of global society', Chapter 4 in Sreberny-Mohammadi et al (eds) (1997) *Media in Global Context: A Reader*, London: Arnold
- Shweder, Richard A. and Levine, Robert A. (eds) (1984), *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Singer, Peter (1975) *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for our Treatment of Animals*, New York: Random House
- Sitkoff, H. (1978) *A New Deal For Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue Volume I: The Depression Decade*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1995) *Multilingualism for All*, Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger
- Smith, M.G. (1982) 'Ethnicity and ethnic groups in America: the view from Harvard', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1
- Smith, Tom W. (1980) 'Ethnic Measurement and Identification', *Ethnicity*, 7, pp. 78-95
- Sollors, Werner (1986) *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sollors, Werner (ed) (1996) *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, New York: New York University Press.
- Sowell, Thomas (1978) 'Ethnicity in a Changing American', *Daedalus*, Vol. 107, No. 1, pp. 213-237
- Spickard, Paul R. (1989) *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America*, London: University of Wisconsin Press
- Spiro, M.E. (1984) 'Some reflections on cultural determinism and relativism with special reference to emotion and reason', Chapter 12 in Shweder and LeVine (eds) (1984) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., Winseck, D., McKenna, J. and Boyd-Barrett, O. (eds) (1997) *Media in Global Context: A Reader*, London: Arnold
- Steinberg, Stephen (1989) *The Ethnic Myth: race, ethnicity, and class in America*, Boston: Beacon Press
- Sterling, Polly (2000) 'Identity in Language: An Exploration into the Social Implications of Linguistic Variation', *Agora*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 1-17 Available at: <http://www.tamu.edu/chr/agora/winter00/sterling.pdf>
- Stocking, Jr., George W. (1966) 'Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective', *American Anthropologist*, 68, pp. 867-882
- Sue, S. (2003) 'Foreword' in Chun et al (2003) *Acculturation: Advances in Theory, Measurement, and Applied Research*, Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association
- Takaki, Ronald T. (1993) *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co
- Tapp, Robert B. (ed) (2000) *Multiculturalism: Humanist Perspectives*, New York: Prometheus Books
- Taylor, Charles and Gutmann, Amy (eds) (1994) *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition*, Chichester: Princeton University Press
- Taylor, Jared (1992) *Paved with Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America*, New York: Carroll and Graf
- Taylor, Patricia Ann (1981) 'Education, Ethnicity, and Cultural Assimilation in the United States', *Ethnicity*, 8, pp. 31-49
- Taylor, Ronald D. and Wang, Margaret C. (eds) (1997) *Social and Emotional Adjustment and Family Relations in Ethnic Minority Families*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Taylor, Ronald L. (ed) (2002) *Minority Families in the United States: A Multicultural Perspectives*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Taylor, Rupert (1996) 'Political Science encounters 'race' and 'ethnicity'', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4: 884-895
- The American Presidency Project (2008) '326-Remarks in Timahoe, County Kildare, Ireland, October 5<sup>th</sup> 1970, available at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2698>
- The Guardian* (2008) 'Everybody loves Chris', January 7 2008, accessed from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/jan/07/comedy.usa>
- Thernstrom, S., Orlov, A., and Handlin, O. (eds) (1980) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*,
- Thernstrom, S., Orlov, A. and Handlin, O. (eds) (1981) *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Thernstrom, S. and Thernstrom, A. (1999) *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*, New

York: Touchstone

Thomas, Linda and Wareing, Shan (eds) (1999) *Language, Society and Power: An introduction*, London: Routledge

Thompson, John B. (1995) *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Tylor, Edward B. (1881) *Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization*, London: Macmillan and Co

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1978) *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*, adopted and proclaimed at its twentieth session on 27 November 1978, Available at: [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_prejud.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_prejud.htm)

U.S. Census Bureau (1983) 'Supplementary Report: *Ancestry of the Population by State: 1980*'

U.S. Census Bureau (2004) '*Ancestry: 2000*'

Valle, M.M. (1964) *Two Concepts of Race – Human Life Zones: The Road to Academic Integration*, Lima: Institute of Human Studies

van den Berge, Pierre L. (1978) 'Race and ethnicity: a sociobiological perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4

van den Berghe, Pierre L. (1981) *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, London: Elsevier

van den Berghe, Pierre L. (1984) 'Ethnic cuisine: culture in nature', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 386-397

Vargas, Joao H. Costa (2006) *Catching Hell in the City of Angels: Life and Meanings of Blackness in South Central Los Angeles*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Vermeulen, Hans and Govers, Cora (eds) (1994) *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'*, Amsterdam: Spinhuis.

Vertovec, Steven (2001) 'Transnationalism and identity', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 573-582

Vincent, C.E. (1972) 'Interfaith Marriages: Problem or Symptom' in Barron (ed) (1972) *The Blending American: Patterns of Inter-marriage*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books

Waldinger, Roger and Perlmann, Joel (1998) 'Second generations: past, present, future', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 5-24

Waller, James (2000) *Prejudice across America*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi

Walzer, M., Kantowicz, E.T., Higham, J. and Harrington, M. (1982) *The Politics of Ethnicity*, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Walzer, Michael (1996) *What It Means To Be An American: Essays On The American Experience*, New

York: Marsilio

- Warner, W. Lloyd and Srole, Leo (1976 [1945]) *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, Greenwood Press Reprint
- Waters, Mary C. (1990) *Ethnic Options: choosing identities in America*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Waters, Mary C. (1996) 'Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City', Chapter 8 in Portes (ed) (1996) *The New Second Generation*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Weber, Max (1978) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Vols. 1, 2; Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, London: University of California Press.
- Wei, William (1993) *The Asian American Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press
- West, Cornel (1993) *Race Matters*, Boston: Beacon Press
- White, Naomi R. (1978) 'Ethnicity, culture and cultural pluralism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 139-153
- Whitfield, S.J. (1998) 'Transaction Introduction' in Kallen ([1924] 1998) *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction
- Wicker, Tom (1996) *Tragic Failure: Racial Integration in America*, New York: Morrow
- Wilkinson, J. Harvie (1997) *One Nation Indivisible: How Ethnic Separatism Threatens America*, Harlow: Addison-Wesley
- Williams, Raymond (1961), *The Long Revolution*, London: Chatto & Windus
- Williams, Raymond (1981), *Culture*, Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks
- X, Malcolm (1990) *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, New York: Pathfinder
- Yancey, W.L., Ericksen, E.P., and Juliani, R.N. (1976) 'Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 391-402
- Yinger, J.Milton (1981) 'Toward a theory of assimilation and dissimilation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 249-264
- Yinger, J. Milton (1985) 'Ethnicity', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 11, pp. 151-180.
- Zangwill, I. (1916) *The Melting-Pot: Drama in Four Acts*, New York: Macmillan
- Zhou, M. and Bankston III, C.L. (1996) 'Social Capital and the Adaptation of the Second Generation: The Case of Vietnamese Youth in New Orleans', Chapter 9 in Portes (ed) (1996) *The New Second Generation*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation